

You Have A Place

Inspired by Jonah 3:1-10 & Mark 1:14-20

The command from Base Camp came to Jonas saying, "Set out for the Northern Front and deliver this message to the troops. 'Forty hours more and the enemy's headquarters will be destroyed.'" So Jonas made ready and went across the battlefield toward the opposing forces. Now this area was enormously large; it took him three hours to make his way over the rugged terrain to reach all the troops who were in position, ready for the fight.

When the opposing forces saw the American troops advancing on them, they surrendered. They repented of the evil they had threatened to do to them, they did not carry it out. The war ended, and peace was restored to the city.

After his tour of duty overseas, Jonas returned to his home state of Mississippi. He struggled with finding his place in the world. What was his purpose in life now that he no longer had military missions to carry out? He had been a good soldier and led his company with courage, fortitude, and great honor. But, his military skill set did not translate easily to finding work in the civilian world. He tried a few jobs, but couldn't find fulfillment and purpose so they didn't last long. He just felt like he didn't belong anywhere, and became a loner and wanderer. He had even been arrested a few times.

A Christian organization serving the homeless and displaced arrived in the city of Jackson. Their main focus is serving veterans who feel disconnected and forgotten. They help them transition back into society and find meaningful work. As Jonas walked toward Smith Park one day, he saw the sun shining on the bright and colorful icon of Jesus over the doors to the downtown Cathedral. He knew they proclaimed the Gospel of God inside those brick walls, but he needed God out here on the street. He had prayed for many months that God would help him find his place in life, but nothing came about. Nothing clicked. Jonas turned into the park, planning to disappear amid the trees and wait for night to fall, as he did most days.

He slowly made his way through the park winding along the stone path, when a bright yellow canopy came into view. The words "You Have A Place" across the top caught his eye... and his breath. Jonas froze in his footsteps and stared. Those words seemed to reach right into his chest and grab hold of his heart. He felt a warm, peaceful sensation begin to spread throughout his body and could have sworn he heard a voice inside saying, this is home. This is your new mission.

Two men reached out to shake Jonas' hand. "This is the time of fulfillment," they said. "Let go of the past, my brother, and believe in yourself. God has a plan, and we are here to help you find new meaning and purpose in life. Come after me, and I will introduce you to some friends." They walked along a little farther and Jonas saw men and women, brothers and sisters, with eyes of hope and trust. They, too, were prior military. One older gentleman, a Vietnam Vet, stood and said to Jonas, "Come, sit with me. I have been where you have been. God is in control, and He will show you the way."

He walked along a little farther and Jonas saw his friend, Sergeant Jamison, who served in the same battalion, and his brother Jonathan. They too were trying to find their way in the world. They heard the Lord calling them to join this group. So they left all behind their thoughts of defeat, loneliness, and negativity to follow Him.