

God of Second Chances – Part 1: Jonah’s Rebellion

- *Jonah 1:1-16*

- This is a unique story in that many times we struggle with exactly what it is that God desires for us to do in our life. Especially as teenagers but definitely not excluded to just them, we often times find ourselves asking, “God, just what is it that you want me to do?”
- The interesting thing that we find here is that Jonah knew EXACTLY what God wanted Him to do, yet he chose not to do it.
- And when he decided not to follow God’s direction, He used an animal to change his mind.
 - Ravens delivered food to Elijah
 - Donkey spoke to the disobedient prophet
 - Jesus rode in on a donkey
- But this story is also about God’s longsuffering and patience with us.
- It has been said by several Pastor’s that there are several different storms that come in our life:
 - **Protecting Storms**
 - Jesus got the disciple on the boat after feeding the five thousand and they headed out to sea. Why? Because he was protecting them from the people. If you remember they had already begun to reason with themselves as to who would be the greatest in Heaven and Jesus realized He had to get them out of there to protect them.
 - **Perfecting Storms**
 - Joseph’s life story
 - **Correcting Storms**
 - Jonah’s disobedience in not following God’s will
- Are you running from something God wants you to do? I can tell you from experience that if you are, you are living a life of trouble & little peace b/c God’s plan is always better than our own.

I. **Jonah Deliberately Disobeyed God. (v.1-3)**

- a. **Obviously this was something Jonah did not want to do. He did not approve of what the people of Nineveh had done to Israel and the truth of the matter is, he did not want the people to repent b/c he believed that they deserved God’s judgment.**
 - i. Church, we as the people of God are in a sad place when we can look at the world & not desire repentance for them, but instead long for them to be judged. Have we not been measured grace that we are underserving of?
 - ii. The Assyrians were cruel people who had often tortured and abused Israel.
 - iii. Jonah put aside the fact that God’s love extends to all and instead sought justice for what they had done.
 - 1. If he obeyed God’s plan, they might repent, God would forgive them and they would escape His judgment.
 - 2. Jonah here thought of God’s plan as an option for him, something he could do if he chose to.
 - 3. But he had also allowed the bitterness in his heart to get to such a point that he was willing to allow a city to miss out on an opportunity for God’s forgiveness, even if he had to disobey God, just so he could get his way.
 - 4. We may try to use our own reason to justify why we don’t want to do His will.
 - iv. Jonah knew that he could not escape from God’s presence.
 - 1. Psalm 139:
 - 2. So b/c he could not run from God, he decided to resign from his position and seek his own way.
 - a. At one time or another, several of God’s servants have sought to resign their position and leave God’s plan.

- i. Moses
 - ii. Elijah
 - iii. Jeremiah
 - b. They all wanted to give up, but God would not let them. They may have gone their way for a time, but it cost them and eventually they obeyed God's will. But notice ...
- b. When Jonah chose to disobey God, Satan provided a way of escape.**
 - i. The Bible tells us that:
 - 1. He found a ship going to Tarshish
 - 2. He had the money to pay the fare
 - ii. Satan will always open a door for us to turn from God.
 - 1. This must be the Lord's will b/c look how things have fallen into place.
 - 2. I've been wanting a relationship for so long and I started praying and he/she came into my life.
 - iii. Never allow circumstances alone to dictate our choices.
 - 1. Each circumstance must be measured up to:
 - a. Will this draw me closer to God?
 - b. Will this help me accomplish God's plan for my life?
 - 2. If Jonah had done this quick evaluation, he could have saved himself a lot of discomfort and pain.
- c. But obviously, he wasn't too concerned about his decision b/c the Bible tells us that he went down to the bow of the ship and went to sleep.**

II. Jonah's Troubles Began (v. 4-10)

- a. He lost God's protection.**
 - i. Throughout the scriptures we see that God desired for the Jews to be a tool for God to accomplish His work. And whenever they disobeyed God, it affected not only them, but the people around them as well.
 - 1. Abraham – brought trouble to his people when he lied twice
 - 2. Achan – brought trouble to the Army of Israel b/c he robbed God.
 - 3. Jonah – brings a world of trouble to some pagan fisherman here on the open waters in a storm.
 - ii. And this is just another reason we need to consider our choices b/c of the people we may be jeopardizing.
 - iii. **Ezekiel 33:8 – “When I say to the wicked, if you've warned the wicked of his way and you don't warn that man, then he'll die in his sin, but his blood will I require at his hand.”**
- b. He lost God's voice.**
 - i. We see in these verses that God stopped speaking and began to send storms his way to get his attention.
 - 1. How ironic that everything in nature would obey God except for His servant Jonah.
 - ii. He even tried to use the pagan sailors to get his attention.
 - 1. They did not even know who God was, yet they ask Jonah to call out o Him.
 - 2. The Bible even tells us in verse 10 that the men ask Jonah why he had disobeyed God.
- c. He lost God's power through prayer.**
 - i. We see here that the men are calling out to their god's and begging for deliverance, meanwhile Jonah is missing an opportunity to show the power of the Most High God.
 - ii. The one man on board who could make a difference through his prayers was busy sleeping, unconcerned for his own safety or the safety of others.

d. He lost his testimony.

- i. Jonah had confessed to the crew that he was running from God.
- ii. Jonah allowed his ego to get in the way of repentance.
- iii. What a great opportunity he missed to not only show the power of God, but the forgiveness of God to these sailors.

III. Jonah's Suffering Began (v.11-17)

- Charles Spurgeon once said, "God never allows his children to sin successfully". Jonah was proof of this statement.
 - **Hebrews 12:6 – "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."**
- a. The sailors pleaded with Jonah & his God for deliverance from the storm.**
 - i. They were throwing everything they could overboard to try and save their lives.
 - ii. In many senses, they did more than Jonah did and most assuredly showed more compassion than Jonah did.
 1. What a shame it is when unbelievers have more compassion and "spirituality" about themselves than we as Christians do sometimes.
- b. As a last resort, they threw Jonah into the sea.**
 - i. They begged for God to forgive them for what they were doing and not to hold them accountable for his life.
- c. The storm ceased.**
 - i. At the very moment that the sailors surrendered over Jonah to the ocean the Bible tells us that the storm ceased.
 - ii. And the very next verse tells us that when the storm ceased, the praising came from an unexpected source.
 1. The sailors realized, even though they did not know Him, God had spared their lives.
 2. And though they made not have had much to offer as a sacrifice b/c everything was in the water, you can rest assured that they made a promise to offer their very best when they got back to land.

➤ **What will it take for you to quit running from God?**

- Some of you have been convicted of your sins for sometime, but you continue to run from the very One who loves you more than you can imagine. Why don't you turn around and come back to Him today? We serve a God of second chances, it's not too late.
- Some of you can't get past the mistakes of yesterday. You have allowed Satan to continually bring up your past time and time again. But if you have confessed them, God has already forgotten them while we are still worried about them. Jesus died to set you free from those chains of the past. Why don't you cry out to God for freedom today?
- Some of you know full well, just as Jonah did, what God wants you to do. But perhaps you think you're way is better or maybe you are just not interested in God's plan for you right now.
 - Let me warn you, God used storms in the life of Jonah to get him to understand the importance of following His plan. He will use them in our lives as well. What will it take for you to follow His plan for your life?
- Some of you are like the sailors, you are not a believer, but there have been some things that have happened in your life that you realized there was a God and that He cares for you. Why don't you come to Him today and give Him your sacrifice, your heart and your life?