

You Can't Run; You Can't Hide

Jonah Tries to Run Away from God

Jonah 1:1-6

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, **2** "Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me." **3** But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. **4** But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. **5** Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. **6** The captain came and said to him, "What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish."

Giving Honor to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. To All of God's Sons, Daughters, and Children. To Big Bethel Nation. We greet you in the matchless name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and our Savior. Beloved, our scripture lesson comes from Jonah 1:1-6 (New Revised Standard Version). Our didactic sermon topic is "You can't run; You can't hide."

In this particular passage, God tells the prophet Johan to preach to Nineveh, which is the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Jonah disobeys, sailing in the opposite direction to a city called Tarshish, which is current day southern Spain. God sent a storm to rock the ship, and the sailors in their desperation finally throw Jonah overboard, into the sea. God creates a Great fish. Jesus comes along in the New Testament and tells us that that Great fish was a whale. I don't know about you, but can you imagine the monstrosity of this fish, whose mouth allows it to swallow a man whole? Jonah then spends three days in the belly of this giant fish before he decides to obey God. Have you ever been there? A place where you heard Gods' voice telling you to do something, yet you were disobedient. It may have been God's calling on your life to step out on faith to encourage others, and you may have been to shy to come forth. Maybe God called you to preach, teach,

or serve and you have been dragging your feet. Maybe God has called you to sing His praises, but you don't think you have the talent to do it. Maybe God has called you to serve in leadership, but you are lacking the faith to stand.

As we look at the life of Jonah, we must understand that he did 3 important things:

- Prayed
- Repented
- Obey the Lord

Jonah Prayed: In Chapter 2 we hear Jonah's prayer. You see, Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, and in verse 2 he said "Out of the belly of Sheol, did I cry out to thee." Jonah was in a personal state of Hell or torment. He realized that he was living in sin and sought to flee from the presence of the Lord. Right there in the belly of the great fish, he did an assessment of where God was in him and where he was in God. Jonah began to pray to the one that could answer. The God of Heaven and Earth heard his prayer. I remember a song we'd sang, "Can't sleep at night, something ain't right. Maybe God is trying to tell you something." Is God trying to tell you something? Stop right there where you are and talk to the Lord in prayer.

Jonah Repented. In Jonah 2:9-10 we read ⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!" ¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land. Jonah gave the Lord some praise. My brothers and sisters, have you ever noticed that your praise is different when you are going through a hardship? Have you noticed that your praise and worship is different when you've got pain in your body? Have you ever realized that when you and I were wrong and disobedient, God shed His grace on us, and that there are some blessings that you just can't give an account for? But "Thanks be to God that we found ourselves in a situation or a circumstance that allowed us to stop and REPENT!!! Hallelujah, to the Lamb of God. Even Jonah said "I will sacrifice to You (Lord) what I have vowed; I will pay." Have you made some promises to God? Have you paid God what you promised you would pay? Have you been true with your time, talent, and treasure? After Jonah repented, the Lord spoke to the fish and it spewed Johan out upon the dry land. Your issue may not be the fish, it may be that supervisor on the job. It may be that pain or that condition in your body. It may be that neighbor, friend, or family member. Whatever or whoever it is, God

can talk to it. Hallelujah, tell somebody, "Repent."

Obey the Lord: Obedience is better than sacrifice. (1 Samuel 15:22)

The great fish vomits Jonah up on the beach and he starts walking to Nineveh. As I read the text, I realized that Jonah was exactly where God called him to be; which was in Nineveh to preach his word. Jonah couldn't run and he couldn't hide. When Jonah preaches, all the Ninevites repent, and God spares the city. My brothers and sisters, isn't it a blessing to walk in obedience to God? Whatever your gift is, use it for the glory of the Lord. If you've been running; you can't run fast enough to get out of God's presence. If you've been hiding; you can't go far enough to get out of God's presence. What are you saying preacher? Thank You, I'm so glad you asked. I'm simply saying, "You Can't Run; You Can't Hide."

In Closing,

You can't run; You can't hide. At this story's end, we see that Jonah had some prejudices and pouted. My brothers and sisters you don't have to pout. You can rejoice in the Lord. I came to let you know that you can Pray, Repent, and Obey the Lord today. He is able to wash away the stench of sin from your life. Romans 10:9-11 says ⁹ because^[a] if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." You can't run. You can't hide. Hallelujah, Amen.