

Jonah: Lessons From a Man Who Ran.



PART ONE **Jonah Chapter One**

17th April-
24th April-
1st May-

The Race you can't win
Insights from an insider
A matter of great concern



Opening Question: What stood out for you from Sunday's message? Do you have a story/testimony about running from God?

BIG POINT- When You Run: You run to dangerous places

But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

Jonah- decided to take a boat. Not the safest form of transport in his day!

Question:

Have you ever wanted to warn a Christian friend who seems to be running from what God wants for them. Have you ever been warned yourself?

- What sorts of dangerous places have people run to?
- Why are these dangerous places?

A relationship?

A business partnership?

A financial investment or deal?

A career or ministry decision?

BIG POINT- When You Run: Your Life starts to unravel.

But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. So the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted. "Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives."

This happens because, when you run from God-

- 1) You turn your back on THE source of wisdom and truth. (Prov. 1:7)
- 2) You turn your back on the ONLY source of unconditional love and acceptance. (Rom 5:8) So you start behaving in odd ways to gain love and acceptance from others.
- 3) When you run from God, you run from his purpose for you. (Ex 9:16). It's only in the creator/creation relationship that you find and thrive in the purpose for which you were created.

Question:

- Acceptance, purpose and truth come from God- if you don't find them in him- where else do people 'run' for these things?
- Do you expect these others sources to provide this? Is that fair on them or reasonable to expect? i.e. Can Your spouse or partner, your career or achievements provide you with these things?

BIG POINT- When You Run: You often hurt those closest to you.

Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. "Why has this awful storm come down on us?" they demanded. "Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?"

Jonah's decision to run from God didn't just affect him. The sailors got caught up in his choices. It even affected their livelihood (v.5).

Question:

Who else pays the price of our running if you're a....

Child

Husband/wife

Employee

Parent

Grandparent

Single Adult

BIG POINT: God does not sit on his hands when we run from him.

God often chooses not to protect us from the consequences of decisions made 'on the run.' He can even amplify consequences and get involved in unraveling your life. Sometimes we miss the link between storms and running.

But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.

Questions:

- How do you feel about God making life difficult for you when you run from him?
- What does this tell you about how God feels about you?
- Does God have a right to do this to his children? (1 Cor. 16:19-20) (1 Cor. 7:23)
- Are there any storms in your life right now- are they a consequence of a broken world, or are they a result of God trying to wake you up like Jonah?
- According to verse 17, God seems to have known Jonah would 'run' and has prepared for it. How do you feel about that? (Psalm 103:13-14)