

Jonah: Lessons From a Man Who Ran.



PART Two **Jonah Chapter Two**

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

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



Recap: Last week we discovered that Jonah's experience of running from God is very similar to our own.

- When you run- you run to dangerous places
- When you run- life starts to unravel
- When you run- you often hurt those closest to you
- When you run- God does not sit on his hands.

This week: We learn five things about God's attitude towards those who run.

BIG POINT- God listens to the runner's prayers.

2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the fish. 2 He said, "I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me!"

Despite God being justified in washing his hands - he turns his ear.

Question:

- How do you respond when those close to you end up reaping the consequences of their decisions after ignoring your warnings, or advice?
- God is not like me! Why would God listen to the cry of someone who's run from him?

The bible is clear, God always responds to repentance (The Hebrew word 'shube' always includes the idea of **turning** away from sin and **turning** back to God see Ez. 33:8-11)

Not knowing this about God is very dangerous- It results in more running and worse consequences.

BIG POINT- God is in the circumstances that stop us running.

2:3 You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. Then I said, 'O Lord, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.'

When you look back, you often discover God was the one who brought you to the end of yourself. When God orchestrates difficult circumstances, he's not paying you back, he's trying to bring you back.

Question:

- Have you ever experienced anything difficult that you're now very grateful for? Was it God?
- What does a good or loving parent do when their children 'run off'?

BIG POINT- God's discipline is thorough.

2:5 "I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head.

I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever.

Jonah's experience was very extreme- it probably felt like more than he deserved. He literally thought his life was over! (V.7)

Question:

- What other biblical examples of God's thorough discipline can you remember? (Israel's wandering in the desert (40 Years!). David's adultery and the loss of his son. Israel's exile in Babylon (70 years!)
- Why do you think God is so thorough?
- Is it possible he trying to make sure we never forget- so that we never want that to happen again? Is God trying to help us associate rebellion with pain?
- What stops you making the same mistakes again and again. (as a child- as an adult)? (Answer: Pain!)
- When you rescue others from the pain of their bad choices, do you help them in the long run?

BIG POINT- To run from God is to run from his provision and protection.

2:8 Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies.

The word 'mercy' is the Hebrew word "hesed" referring to God's unconditional covenant love.

Jonah realizes his sin is the same as the Ninevites! In perusing something I want (an idol) I've turned my back on the unconditional relational love that could be mine.

Question:

- Why do most of us run in the first place? (Answer: we often think we're missing out on something we can get elsewhere – an idol. Only later do we discover it cannot deliver what it promises)
- What idols have you run to? Did they disappoint you?

Jonah discovered "salvation comes from the Lord ALONE" (v.8). That includes salvation from loneliness, guilt, a crippling sense of worthlessness, from an unfulfilling life and from joyless living.

BIG POINT- Our God is a God of second chances.

2:10 Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

3:1 Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a second time: "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you." This time Jonah obeyed the Lord's command and went to Nineveh.

God could have sent Jonah home and recruited a less flawed prophet. But he didn't. God can even use our experiences of running to help others.

Questions:

- Does you see your past as disqualifying you from being used, or as a qualification for being used?
- How does God see it? Did God ever use 'runners' in the bible? (Jacob- Moses- Elijah- Gideon.)
- Who should we use in our churches? (Answer: ex-runners!)