

Jonah 1

The Pursuing Heart of God

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

A) Jonah is a Prophet living in the time of 2 Kings 14 when Jeroboam II is the King reigning in Israel

B) So Jonah is a prophet on the scene in the time frame of our study in 2 Kings

C) Here is what we read about **Jeroboam II** - 2 Kings 14:25

He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.

D) So Jonah was a real prophet in Israel at the time

1) Contemporary of Hosea / Amos / possibly even Isaiah

Interesting Gath Hopher was an area in Galilee just outside of Nazareth

A) In the N.T. the religious leaders were arguing about the **validity of the ministry of Jesus** – No prophet has come out of Galilee

B) They were wrong – they forgot about Jonah

1) **Jonah = Dove / Amatai = truth**

Jonah's Call: 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

A) Nineveh was a great city – 60 miles in circumference with a population of around 600,000

Aa){ **Capital city of Assyria/ Modern day Iraq**

1) Assyria was the powerhouse in the world at that time.

B) The city was surrounded by a great wall 100ft in Ht. and wide enough to run 3 Chariots on top of it

1) On the Wall were 1,200 towers that stood 200ft high all of which made for a mighty Fortress

C) But the city was full of pride and wickedness – So God was calling Jonah to go and cry out against it

1) The word Cry means **to preach or proclaim !**

D) **What was his message? – Ch. 3:4**

1) Jonah was supposed to go and tell Nineveh that in 40 days they would be overthrown!

E) 40 days and Judgment is Coming!

So God comes to Jonah and says Arise!

A) I have **a special job in my home** – I am the human alarm clock

B) We have regular ones – but most of the members of my family have no problem sleeping thru them

C) **So Since I am an early riser – I get to wake everyone up.**

1) **Denise with a Kiss** – come on sweat heart....

2) Amanda with singing – good morningtime to rise and shine

3) Aaron Dude – get up

4) Amy Princess – time to wake up

D) This call to Jonah is like that – endearing – Jonah I have a special Job for you –

E) **PROPHET WITH A PURPOSE**

1) Go to Nineveh and tell them in 40 days they will be Judged.

V.3 But Jonah arose 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 the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

God said **GO!!!!** Jonah said **NO!!!!** Jonah is running from the call of God! Screens **Map 1**

A) Now Nazareth is about 462 miles NE of Nineveh

Map 2 Like going from S.D. to San Jose

B) **Map 3** Jonah heads to Joppa – to catch a boat and go about 2400 miles West to Tarshish = Spain

C) That would be like going from **Map 4 SD** to WV

Why is Jonah running from the call of God?

A) Some have suggested that it was because Jonah was afraid of the brutality of the Assyrians

B) Wicked – talked study last time about how they skinned people alive

1) **Impale people on poles outside of the city** {
2) Marched into flaming pits / tore tongues out at the roots { Rep for their Brutality

C) Some have said the Dove turns Chicken and runs

D) Be like going to Iraq today: Finding Osama Bin Laden's Cave { **Osama 40 days God is going to get you.**

1) Who would want that Job?

E) Osama's men come out with their Knives and rocket Launchers

But I don't think it was fear that kept Jonah from going at all. That wasn't the issue

A) In fact I hate to jump ahead in a story but Jonah gives us the reason for his reluctance & rebellion

B) Ch. 4 lets us in on a Previous conversation he had with the Lord.

C) Right now in Ch.1 Jonah is running from God but most of you know God is going to get to Jonah to Nineveh eventually – { **Scenic Route**

D) When Jonah gets there, he will deliver his message – and Nineveh responds –

1) Revival breaks out in Ch.3 as Nineveh responds to Jonah message and repents -

So Revival is breaking out in Nineveh people are repenting – For a preacher –this is a good thing – Revival – response

A) We live for moments like this – NOT JONAH

V.1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. STOP ATTENTION

B) Jonah is a true fire and brimstone preacher – Likes telling people they are going to hell –

Judgment is coming and I catch wait to watch you fry!

You & you Are going to hell and I am glad about

C) Am I being a little extreme/ Note what he says next

2 So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? [Evidence of this earlier conversation – Lord when I was home when you called me I told you why I didn't want to go – that is why I fled] Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.

3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

WOW!!!- It would be better for me to die than to watch you be merciful to that nation

A) I want to die – because you are too nice – you are too merciful –

B) I wanted the **Ninevites to burn in hell** – You are forgiving them .

1) That is why Jonah ran from God's call.

C) That is why he was trying to do 2500 miles outside of the will of God

1) He didn't want God to be merciful to Nineveh

That is why Jonah ran from God's call– but why do we do the same thing? 3 Reasons

1) Selective service – We want to do something else!

A) Announcement is made for Children's ministry: God tugs on our hearts – I want you to do that –

1) No !!! Not doing Children's

B) I Remember a time when a guy : Lead worship – great need in the Kids wing

1) No I want to play the Big room

C) One guy – I want to serve/ Great! Usher greeter first face first impression

1) You want me to usher – Yea it will be great -
Yea but I feel called to preach.

D) Selective Service I am not going to get involved because it is not what I want to do.

1) Can't do what I want to do here – find a place where I can

E) That just reveals a person's heart – not really interested in serving { **Selective Service**

Another reason why People run from the call of God is because they really don't believe God knows what He is doing

A) God I can't go there – I can't do that-
Mistake God – that is not the right thing for me.

B) We think that we know God's will for our lives better than He does.

1) **Lord I know you made heaven and earth – you made me – you see the end from the beginning – but you are off on this one.**

C) See how idiotic that is! - But we do that! –

Another reason we run from God's call is we somehow think that if we remove ourselves from the responsibility we are no longer responsible

A) Example: Sitting in bed with your wife – Hear a noise – She says did you hear that noise –

B) Now when she says that she is saying – get up go check that out

1) But you respond: what noise – I didn't hear anything

C) God brings a need into our path – We run from it – Ignore it

1) Not my problem. Not my responsibility

D) So sometimes we can run from God for those reasons –

1) For Jonah he just didn't want to see God be merciful to Nineveh

Huge lesson of this book – Jonah knows about the grace of God in his head –

A) But he Needs to experience it in his heart

B) Head Knowledge – but He needs heart Knowledge

1) So Jonah runs from God's call -

C) But God is not going to let Jonah get away easily.

V.4 But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

Now this is what Blows my mind: Jonah runs and God pursues after Jonah

A) But God had other options – Hosea was on the Scene – Amos was prophesying at this time!
Isaiah was also there

B) Right there God has 3 Prophetic heavy weights to call on 3 powerful prophets

C) God could have said – Jonah is being an idiot so Hosea I need you to go to Nineveh and deliver a message

D) But God doesn't do that – He pursues after – Jonah – **He is not going to let Jonah get away easily**

1) Puts up some road blocks in the path – Starts with a Storm

E) Psalm 135:7 **He brings the wind out of His treasures**

Why does God do this? Listen up

A) God was more interested in what HE was trying to do IN Jonah's life – than what HE wanted to do THRU Jonah's life.

B) See God didn't need Jonah's voice – He had other preachers – But God wanted Jonah's heart

C) Notice it doesn't say God was angry or even disappointed with Jonah

1) God was wanting to do something in Jonah's life and **Nineveh was part of the Journey for Jonah**

D) Part of the training process for Jonah

This is something that we must remember about God

A) Told in Ephesians 2 we are his workmanship – Work or art – His master piece in the making

B) God has a plan for you. He is in the process of molding you & shaping you to fit into that plan

C) God is seeking to do a work in our lives and thru our lives

- 1) Training grounds – different places – scenarios – situations as well as opportunities for ministry –
- 2) **Because it is all part of the process**

So life is filled w/ doors that God wants us to walk thru

A) Each door is a part of the molding process to accomplish his purpose in our lives –

B) Might be a place of Revelation... / place of stretching.... / a place where we are **challenged beyond our abilities and comprehension**

C) God places an open door before you that he wants you to walk in – **but if you choose to run from that – God loves you enough to pursue you**

D) Not because he can't accomplish his work without you in that situation – but because he wants to work in you

- 1) **He is committed to you**

Now If you continue to run – God will find someone else for that work –

A) But you will come to another door like that at some pt. in time

B) Because it is the next step in the growth process for you.

- 1) It is necessary step for your growing in the Lord – For Your usefulness

C) **We had an interesting conversation in my Bible class at the School this week –**

- 1) Talking about having a passion for God
- 2) Began – Other things passionate about. Music / sports - { **How is that displayed ? Time/ energy**

Well one of the girls said the thing that she was passionate about was her School work

A) Obsessed with her homework – One of the boys asked her – Do you like Homework

B) Her response was interesting – **She said not really but I enjoy the REWARD**

C) It was really a profound answer: You see she is thinking ahead – toward college – Her career

1) She has her eye on the prize – **So she sees the process she is involved in now thru that lens.**

D) Part of the pathway / part of the Prep for her future. { **She is focused on the Prize!**

That is a great picture of the Christian life. God has a plan for our lives – it is Purpose with a Prize

A) Paul declared in Phil 3:14 **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

B) So many believers live life focused on the Process

- 1) So for that reason they **struggle in the moment** – because they are focused only on the here & now

C) They run from the calling of God at that moment in their life

- 1) because all they can think about is present comfort – they don't want to be uncomfortable.

D) They run from the calling of God instead of to it. 1) Not realizing that calling is part of the process & training ground for their future.

E) It is literally part of the prize!

My life:

A) Days here as a Youth Pastor – **Grace & ministry** What it means to SERVE.

B) **Calling to Oregon was a lot about – Faith**

- 1) About Patience – God's timing.
- 2) **About dependence** – getting out of the way.
- 3) About Keeping the main thing the main thing

C) **Here: One big thing:** Courage – lead courageously

Make tough decisions

A) Some are not going to like – *Lord I don't want to rock the boat* – He says Rock it – too comfortable

B) Courage to take risks with young Guys

- 1) Yankees vs the A's { Phil / Jason / John Randle / Scott C /
- 2) **Thrash metal worship**

C) All part of the process – You can run – say Lord I am comfortable – play it safe

1) but all you are doing is slowing the process of growth that God is wanting to do in your life.

So Jonah runs but God sends a storm – that is often the first step in the Process – things get Rocky

A) God is saying I am not going to make it easy for you to rebel

B) You know Jonah's first hundred miles was pretty smooth

C) Clear passage on his way from NAZ down to Joppa

1) Gets to Joppa and he finds an open door to go in the opposite direction from God's call

Side note: Don't just pray for open doors!

A) I sometimes cringe when I hear people say things like I was praying that if it was the Lord's will – open the door.

B) An open door can be a good confirmation only after you have heard the Lord's voice in your heart – Peace / Scripture

1) Confirmation when God opens the Door

C) But an open door by itself is not always a sign that God is in something – Satan **can also open doors**

1) Here Jonah finds a ship going in the opposite direction from where God wanted him to go!

D) So the first thing that God does in his pursuit of Jonah is he sends a storm

V5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.

Notice that others were impacted by Jonah's rebellion { These sailors were caught in this storm and were afraid. [Seasoned sailors]

A) Always the case – there is always collateral damage to sin

a) **Sailors were afraid** – Our sin / our rebellion / affects others

B) And notice what Jonah is doing! He is asleep

1) It is the only way that he can **shut off his conscience & silence that voice of conviction**

C) Ever have days – stressed – can't cope – can't deal with all this stuff? – I am going to bed!

1) Escape

People do the same thing spiritually – Check out

A) They find ways to ignore that voice of conviction that voice of Calling

B) the problem is if you do that too long you end up like Samson

1) **Asleep – Delilah cut his hair** – Samson the Philistines are upon you

C) Samson arose and said – I will kill them like I have always done – Saddest verses in the Bible

1) Samson did not realize that the Spirit of God had departed from him. His anointing was Gone.

D) Might have been that story that inspired David to write – **Please don't take your HS from me Lord.**

So Jonah is asleep – One more thing that this teaches us

A) Running from God is exhausting ! Swimming upstream vs going with the flow!

B) So Jonah is asleep and he needs to be waked up!

v.6 So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."

V.6 Captain – Arise Again

A) Same word again – arise – Oh No !

B) God speaking the same message to you! – Sermon here

1) Next day radio – Friend – Devotions - He loves you enough to tell you more than once

C) God in his grace is repeating the message because he is trying to get your attention.

D) So God is trying to get Jonah's attention- Sends a Storm

1) Captain uses the same word – Watch what happens next V.7

And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

A) Casting lots was a common practice but it was purely random

B) God allows the Lot to fall on Jonah – Hello Jonah got your attention yet? Wake up man
RD v.8-10

C) **Liar** – Hebrew – Speaks of one in a Covenant relationship with God

D) Walking in the Fear of the Lord – Reverence for God – **desire to please Him**

1) Jonah has broken his Covenant and is Running from God's will **RD V.11-12**

Now is this repentance? It might have been but Jonah is not thinking Rescue – thinking death

A) Just Throw me over board – he is not thinking about going back to Nineveh- He wants to die.

B) SO Throw me into the storm {let me face my fate

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them.

C) **The men were reluctant to do that- they are rowing but finally when they could row no more**

14 Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You."

D) God don't hold this against us !

15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

Amazing: Jonah's sin results in the conversion of these sailors

A) I don't think Jonah gets credit for this – no reward

Spurgeon observation

Sinners, when they are tossed upon the sea of conviction, make desperate efforts to save themselves

The fleshly efforts of awakened sinners must inevitably fail

The soul's sorrow will continue to increase as long as it relies on its own efforts

The way of safety for sinners is to be found in the sacrifice of another on their behalf

V.17 Final Pursuit: Storm / Captain Arise / Lots / Next God prepares a great fish!

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

A) The next thing that God does with Jonah is he works in the miraculous

B) He works in the supernatural – Fish swallows Jonah

C) God will do the same in your life and my life to get our attention he will move in the miraculous

D) Escape an auto accident –
1) Leave 5 minutes late

Question have you been running from God ? What has he done to pursue you

A) Calm Now? – Know this the storm is coming –
Famine is around the corner

Loves He chastens

B) **Prodigal son – good times / famine / pig pen** –
Your pig pen is approaching – question is will you survive that long

C) God pursues you not because He is out to get you – But he wants to restore you

D) Don't wait for that – heed God's word today and Arise – **Give Jesus the wheel – Give him the reigns**

1) God is my co- pilot – No he is the Pilot – I want to kick back in 1st class

**E) God wants you to surrender today – Meet you
– Arise**

**God is in the Business of Blessing Bless able
behavior**

Running from God

A)Sweaty palms heart beating –

B) Time of personal responsibility –Arise