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“Thankfully we serve an omniscient God who not only sees us when we attempt to hide from Him, but He also ‘perceives our thoughts from afar and is familiar with all our ways.’ (Psalm 139:2-3) He forgives us and restores us, because of Jesus’ sacrificial atonement, won for us on Calvary. We are never out of His mind. We are forever objects of His love and care. Let us continually trust and obey, praise and worship Him, our Creator and our Redeemer.”

GOD’S CALL TO JONAH – JONAH 1:1-2

When God placed a call on His prophet Jonah’s life, His call was specific, clear and understandable. It even included an explanation.

Go...to Nineveh

Preach...Against it

Explanation...its wickedness has come up before Me.

As we read God's reason for sending Jonah to Nineveh, we likely will become aware of wickedness in our own nation which is presently coming up before God. Our nation, which began as a people of God, has drifted and fallen into every imaginable sin.

- Violence is commonplace on our streets.
- Homosexuality is paraded.
- Illegal drugs are available in our schools.
- The idolatry of secular humanism is being taught to our children while...
- The 10 commandments have been banned from our schools.

We are a fallen nation. Could it be that God is calling out to us, His children, that remain committed to Him, much like He called Jonah?

Go...Stand for righteousness.

Speak out...Against wickedness.

Call My wayward people back to Me.

JONAH'S RESPONSE – JONAH 1:3

Instead of heeding God's call, Jonah turned his back on God's call by running away from it. Nineveh was about 500 miles east and a bit north of Palestine, but Jonah boarded a ship at Joppa headed the opposite direction. He was headed for Tarshish which was approximately 2,000 miles west of Palestine, in modern day Spain.

At the time, Tarshish was a remote trading post on the fringes of civilization, while Nineveh was the greatest metropolis of its day.

Jonah's travel plans reveal Jonah's misconception of Jehovah, whom he had been called to serve. His perception of God's call given to him possibly went like this, "Since Jehovah is the God of Israel, I can escape His call on my life by leaving Israel." Jonah's perception of God was faulty and it was dwarfed. It is impossible to flee from the God Who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and sustains them. (Hebrews 1:3a)

Jonah did not have the heart of David who said, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? ... if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139:7-10)

GOD'S INTERVENTION – JONAH 1:4

Jonah's attempt to run from God's call on his life was unsuccessful. God did not allow His servant to do so. He pursued Jonah with a mighty storm.

Have you ever been in a boat when the wind suddenly began to blow and the shore was not in sight? A young man familiar with sudden storms on the Great Lakes tells this story. "I waded out after the storm had subsided to rescue the passengers in a yacht which had been driven by the storm into a reef and crashed. The man and woman aboard the sinking ship said that several years earlier they had been forced, during a similar storm, to land their single engine plane in a field in unknown territory. But nothing so terrified them as their encounter with the wind and the waves." I believe the men on board Jonah's ship would add their "Amen" to the above account.

STORMS IN OUR LIVES

We, like Jonah, often foolishly ignore or disobey God's call on our lives. But the "Hound of Heaven" does not allow us to become comfortable in our rebellious state. His repeated call comes to us in various ways. Hurricanes, earthquakes, rebellious children, the storm of poor health or poverty, wars and rumors of war, can all be used to bring us to our knees and back to the God Who created us and Who redeemed us.

THE FRIGHTENED CREW – JONAH 1:5-6

The terrified sailors cried out to their gods. Every man to his own god ... except Jonah. He was comfortable in his sin and was sound asleep in the hull of the ship.

It was a pagan captain that God used to awaken His sleeping prophet. A pagan, who feared God even though he did not really know Him. The inner recesses of the captain's heart were bearing witness to him that there is a God who holds the whole world, the wind and the waves, in His hand. God's invisible quality — His eternal power — was clearly seen by him. (Romans 1:20)

SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

Once Jonah was awakened, he undoubtedly was aware of the crisis he and the crew were facing. He also was aware of why they were all in danger. His sin was not hurting just him, it was hurting every man on board the ship. Sin is like that! It has far reaching consequences which we are not always aware of.

Our personal sins of pride, criticism, ingratitude, temper, bitterness or an unforgiving spirit often hurt the people we profess to love the most, our family and our friends.

CASTING LOTS – JONAH 1:7

Jonah watched as sailors resorted to the casting of lots to determine who was to blame for their frightful condition. Jonah was fingered by God. It was He who determined the outcome of the lots being cast. God's Word tells us, "the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord." (Proverbs 16:33)

JONAH'S TRIAL – JONAH 1:8-10

The sailors held a brief but fair trial. Jonah was questioned by the pagan sailors:

Who is responsible for the trouble we are facing?

What is your occupation?

Which country do you come from?

Jonah's answer is perhaps the one bright spot in the entire account. Jonah confessed that he "worshiped the Lord God, Who made the sea and the land." Jonah still remembered Who he belonged to and unashamedly confessed his faltering faith in the Lord God.

His confession of faith brought terror to the pagan sailors who did not know Jonah's God. They had many gods but they did not have a god who could make such a claim and then back that claim by sending wind and waves to crash against their once seaworthy ship.

The terrified seamen asked Jonah one rhetorical question, "What have you done?" Jonah had already answered their question. He was running away from the Lord.

Jonah, God has called you, can't you hear His voice?

Souls of men are dying as you run and hide.

CONCLUSION

Jonah was trying to do the impossible... run away from God. There are times in each of our lives when we become "Jonahs" by running away from God ... thinking He doesn't see us:

- When we fail to read His Word.
- When we do not take time to pray.
- When we forego receiving His body and blood to strengthen our faith.
- When we decide a football game (or anything else) is more important than attending church.

Thankfully we serve an omniscient God who not only sees us when we attempt to hide from Him, but He also “perceives our thoughts from afar and is familiar with all our ways.”

(Psalm 139:2-3) He forgives us and restores us, because of Jesus’ sacrificial atonement, won for us on Calvary. We are never out of His mind. We are forever objects of His love and care. Let us continually trust and obey, praise and worship Him, our Creator and our Redeemer.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I am so much like Jonah.

I have often buried myself in the bottom of a ship

When I should be out proclaiming Your salvation to the people You have placed around me.

Forgive me and use me to tell each of them about You...

My wonderful Savior

Amen

PERSONAL APPLICATION – JONAH 1:11-16

*Heavenly Father,
You allow storms to enter each of our lives,
But You never make us go through them alone.
You are always with us, holding us secure in Your loving arms.
We thank You for Your constant love and protection,
But most of all for Your salvation won for us by
Your Son Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen*

Jonah 1:11-16

1. God, Who made the heavens and the earth, spoke to Job out of a storm. Using Job 38:8-11, describe in your own words how God made the sea. What words in Job 38:8-11 line up with God's account of creation in Genesis 1:3,6,9,20 and 24? According to Job 38:11, how are storms stopped?
2. When Jesus was here on earth, what action did He take to quiet the storms? (Mark 4:37-41) (Luke 8:22-25)
- 3/ How is the storm which pursued Jonah described in 1:11?

4. Whose advice did the sailors seek?
5. Since the sailors were familiar with the sea and its storms, why do you think they sought advice from Jonah? (v.9)
6. What advice did Jonah give them? Why might Jonah have been willing to make this suggestion? (Psalm 51:3)
(1 Jn. 1:8-9)
7. Did the sailors immediately take Jonah's advice? What did they do? What did all of their effort accomplish?
8. Tell of a personal "storm" such as sickness, death of a loved one, financial difficulties, family problems, etc. which you have encountered. How were you able to handle your storm? Whose help did you seek?
9. When facing your personal "storm", did its intensity remain the same, decrease or increase? How did you finally gain peace? (John 14:27)

10. When all else failed, what did the beleaguered sailors finally do? (Jonah 1:14a)
11. These heathen sailors did not have God's written Word. Apply what we are told in Psalm 19:1-4a to their situation.
12. Who did the pagan sailors pray to? (Jonah 1:14)
13. What words do they use to describe Jonah?

Is their description accurate?
14. How is God's action acknowledged by the sailors?(Jonah 1:16)
15. What "word of the Lord" were the seamen unknowingly acting on? (Psalm 107:28)
16. What did the sailors finally decide to do? Describe the result of their action and relate it to Psalm 107:29.

17. How did the sailors react to God's marvelous miracle? Relate their action to Psalm 107:30-31.

18. Remembering storms in your own life, relate Psalms 107:28-32 to your personal storms.