

Jonah – The Patriotic Prophet

Text : **Jonah 1: 10-16**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Remember where we left Jonah last week.

1. Jonah was an established prophet of God.
 - a. **II Kings 14: 25** – He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.
 - b. He was called a servant of the Lord.
 - c. His prophecies had come to pass so he was a true prophet. **Deut. 18: 17-22**
2. He had the most prestigious position of any prophet in the kingdom.
 - a. He had the ear of the king.
 - b. He had accurately foretold victory and prosperity for his nation.
3. God commissioned Jonah to go on a special mission for Him; he was to cry out against the great city of Nineveh.
 - a. This was a command from God.
 - b. Jonah did not want to do it.
4. There were several possible reasons why Jonah might not have wanted to go :
 - a. It would discredit him with the king and he would lose his position.
 - b. It would have been a dangerous undertaking.
 - 1) The journey would have been dangerous.
 - 2) The huge city was an intimidating place. (*Like the gates of Mordor.*)
 - 3) Preaching to the Assyrians was frightening. (*Whole villages commit suicide 1st*)
 - c. It was a politically unpalatable task, perhaps even treasonous.
5. Whatever his motive, the prophet sought to escape the task which God had assigned.
 - a. He journeyed to Joppa.
 - b. Found a ship going as far away in the opposite direction as it was possible to get.
 - c. He paid his fair and went below decks to rest. (*Hold = recesses, extreme parts, side*)

B. How many of you have ever bought a ticket to Tarshish ?

1. Jonah walked at least a day and a half to get one. (**30 miles plus**)
2. How far did you go to get your ticket ?

3. All of us have bought one at one time or another. (*Do our thing instead of God's*)
4. How far did you get before you ran into the storm ?

General observations about sin :

1. Any time one runs away from God he always pays his own fare, but he never gets where he thinks he's going. (*It's a fantasy world.*)
2. Sin will take you farther than you want to go, will keep you longer than you want to stay and cost more than you want to pay.
3. Sin is like the grass you thought was greener on the other side of the fence, it never lives up to your expectations. *Satan always lies.* (Gen 3 & ever since.)
4. No matter how good sin seems to be working out, there's a storm ahead.

C. Jonah's sin is more obvious to us than it was to him. *He felt justified in it.*

1. He had had at least two days on his journey to think about it.
2. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is for us to see the sins of others than it is to see our own sins as others see them.
**Prov. 21: 2 – Every man's way is right in his own eyes,
But the Lord weighs the hearts.**
3. Jonah felt so strongly about his desire to see Assyria perish that he was able to deceive himself into thinking the impossible was true. *Escape God* **Psa 139**
 - a. No one else could have convinced Jonah that he could hide from God.
 - b. In many respects, we alone have the ability to deceive ourselves.
 - c. This is why the scriptures so often warn us about self-deception :
**Gal. 6: 7 – Do not be deceived, God is not mocked;
for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.**
**I John 1: 8 – If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves
and the truth is not in us.**
**Jer. 17:9 – The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick; Who can understand it ?**

I. Jonah's actions were taken in the natural realm, but God's response was supernatural.

A. Many unbelievers point to the story of Jonah and ridicule it as a myth.

1. It has been compared to stories of the ancient Greek Gods like "The Odyssey."
2. It is scorned because men cannot explain the events by modern science.
3. God established the laws of nature (science), but He is not confined by them.

B. The concept of a miracle is that it's something that can't be explained by science.

1. Dictionary Definition : A surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is considered to be divine.
2. Those who demand a plausible scientific explanation for everything do so because they don't believe in God.
 - a. God is not provable by the scientific method ... **faith is required.**
 - b. Many things believed by scientists also cannot be proven by their own scientific method, **e.g.,** evolution, the big bang, string theory of time, **etc.**
3. Even if something can be proven scientifically, it may still be a miracle.
 - a. Storms happen in nature.
 - b. The power to start and to stop them at will is supernatural ... miraculous.
 - c. There are many things that could have caused the walls of Jericho to fall, only God could cause it to happen on command.

C. The bible helps us develop our faith in God.

1. All mankind instinctively believes in God, but they don't instinctively know Him.
 - a. The awareness of God is instinctively within man at birth.
 - b. Every society known to archeology has worshipped something.
2. The bible identifies who God is and demonstrates why we should believe in Him.
 - a. Our faith in God is built upon our knowledge of Him.
Rom. 10: 17 – So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
 - b. Faith only comes to those who learn with an open heart to believe.
Heb. 4: 2 – For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.
Six times Jesus said, (Mark 4: 23 – “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”)
 - c. Those who, because of sin and lusts, are without ears to hear will not develop faith.
II Tim. 3: 7 – always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

D. Jonah is a book filled with miracles, things that do not happen in nature.

1. God hurled a storm.
 - a. Storms happen ... very strong storms happen, but this storm came up suddenly.
 - b. The sailors recognized that it was unlike the usual storm.
2. God abruptly ended the storm when conditions were met. (*Throw Jonah in the sea.*)
 - a. They were given a condition and when it was met the storm immediately ended.
 - b. The sailors understood that the ending of that storm was not a natural event.

3. Jonah living in the belly of the fish for three days was miraculous. *It can't happen.*
 - a. There are many fish that can swallow a man **so** his being swallowed was natural.
 - b. There is **no** fish that could or would carry a live man inside himself. *Miraculous.*
 - c. No fish is going to take a man to shore and drop him off. *That's miraculous.*
 4. That an entire city of possibly a million people repented at once is miraculous.
 - a. The preacher was a foreigner whom they viewed as inferior.
 - b. It would take time for the word to spread in such a large city.
 - c. The magnitude of the response required divine interventions. (**II Kg. 7:6ff, 19:35**)
 5. God made a plant to grow large enough in one day to be shade and killed it the next.
 6. Other events could have been miraculous (*e.g. the lot*), but these are indisputably so.
- * Thus, the mighty deeds of God recorded for us in the book of Jonah will build faith in the believer, but magnifies doubt in the skeptic who doesn't believe in miracles.

II. The book teaches us that our sins always affect others.

A. Jonah thought all was going well.

1. He arrived safely in Joppa and secured passage on a ship.
2. With a false sense of security he was safely below decks sleeping soundly.
3. They were sailing, but he hadn't heard from God so he thought he was home free.

B. But no man can escape God. (**Amos 9: 2-4**)

1. He allows every man to make his own decisions, but there consequence for bad ones.
 - a. Saul, the king of Israel learned this the hard way.
I Sam. 15: 23 – **For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.**
 - b. God will punish all who rebel against Him.
Nahum 1: 3 – **The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. ...**
 - c. No one should want to be found on the wrong side of God, especially His children.
Heb. 10: 31 – **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**
2. Not all negative action is judgment. God disciplines those He loves. (*e.g., Jonah*)
 - a. **Hebrews 12: 4-11** ... *Read and exegete*
 - b. **John 15: 2** – **..... and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.**

C. God hurled a storm at Jonah, but all in the ship were affected.

1. This is no ordinary storm. *Everyone on board could have died.*
 - a. It is hurled. (*same word as throwing a spear ... Saul at David*)
 - b. It came up fast without warning.
 - c. The sailors realized it was not an ordinary storm.
2. They feared the ship was going to be broken apart.

Note :

- a. Historically the ships going long distances on the Mediterranean Sea were large.
 - b. There are accounts of some of them having a crew of 450 seamen.
 - c. Some were luxurious; most were very seaworthy; and, they were built for storms.
3. The storm was a disciplinary action against one man, but it was affecting everyone.
 - a. The cargo was lost ... financial hardship.
 - b. The sailors knew this was a supernatural event and began looking for the cause.

D. Sin affects many more than those who commit it.

1. Abraham sinned and it affected two nations or tribes.
 - a. Pharaoh
 - b. Abimelech
 - c. It affected His son ... *Isaac did the same thing.* (*Jacob was deceitful*)
2. The sin of Achan affected others.
 - a. Soldiers died
 - b. His whole family died
3. The sins of David affected many.
 - a. 70,000 died after he ordered a census ... **I Chron. 21: 14.**
 - b. Many died as a result of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba.

III. Jonah had rebelled because of idolatry. *His nation became his idol.***A. Like many before and after Jonah, he took a good thing and placed it above God.**

1. Jonah was a patriot and that's a good thing.
 - a. The text indicates that it was love for country that provoked him to run from God.
 - b. He was so bent on escaping his assigned task that he would rather die than do it.

2. When he became aware that the storm was God’s discipline of him, he did not pray.
 - a. He did not repent of his rebellion ... He did not want Assyria to spared.
 - b. If he could get 40 days away in Tarshish, there would be no time to save them.
 - c. If he could not escape, he felt it better to die than to obey God and cry to Nineveh.

Jonah 4: 2-3 He prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.
 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.

B. Instead of repenting, Jonah told them to drown him in the sea.

1. The sailors valued Jonah’s life more than did he.
 - a. They rowed as hard as they could attempt to reach the coast, but were unsuccessful.
 - b. While they were rowing, Jonah could have surrendered to God’s will and prayed.
 - c. He was so stiff-necked, he would rather die than to obey.
2. This hardheaded abstinence is typical of Israel’s attitude.

Jer. 19: 15 – Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Behold, I am about to bring on this city and all its towns the entire calamity that I have declared against it, because they have stiffened their necks so as not to heed My words.’

3. Thus, in an attempt to foil God’s plan, Jonah insisted they throw him to his death.

C. BUT .. God refused to allow Jonah to die before his task was completed.

1. He “appointed” a big fish to swallow Jonah and keep him alive.
2. After three days in the fish, Jonah realized he was not going to die and surrendered.

CONCLUSION :

A. Sometimes all of us get so involved in our own priorities, that we ignore God’s.

1. We start off with good motives doing something that is basically good. **I John 2: 15**
2. This world is very seductive in a most persistent and patient way. (*Daily pressure*)

B. This is why it’s so very important for us to have daily time with God & His word.

C. This is why you should never miss an opportunity to be with the saints.

Lesson Text :**Jonah 1: 1-17**

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, **2** “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.” **3** But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

4 The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. **5** Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten *it* for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep. **6** So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps *your* god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.” **7** Each man said to his mate, “Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity *has struck* us.” So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. **8** Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this calamity *struck* us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” **9** He said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”

10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, “How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. **11** So they said to him, “What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?”—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy. **12** He said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you.” **13** However, the men rowed *desperately* to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them. **14** Then they called on the LORD and said, “We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, O LORD, have done as You have pleased.”

15 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. **16** Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Hebrews 12: 4-11

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; **5** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; **6** FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. **11** All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.