

Running from God – Pigheadedness

Jonah 1

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 24, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2024

Scripture Reader and Reading: Jim Rich – Psalm 139.7–8

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Billy Henshall – No Suggestions

Prelude:

I. Jonah

- A. ran from God,
- B. ran to God,
- C. ran with God, and
- D. ran ahead of God,
 - 1. as the Bible Book named after him shows.
 - 2. However, the Book of Jonah is not all about him.

II. Truly, it is more about God than anyone.

- A. It shows God granting mercy
 - 1. to sailors,
 - 2. to the city of Nineveh, and
 - 3. to Jonah himself.
- B. It shows
 - 1. that sometimes those you expect to act in a godly way, do not, and
 - 2. that sometimes those you expect to be ungodly, do what is right.

III. It shows that since our God is the sovereign ruler of the world,

- A. his will counts in everything, and
- B. that he expects to do what he says,
 - 1. even if it is unpleasant or
 - 2. we just flat out disagree with it.
 - a) For you see, the will of God is not optional.
 - b) We cannot come to the word of God and

- (1) decide that we will not obey certain parts, or
- (2) try to explain why we can't keep it.

IV. It is God's will.

- A. Nothing more.
- B. Nothing less.
- C. Nothing else.

1. Remember that even the Son of God made a request to his Father, but
2. Jesus also submitted his will to the will of the Father.
 - a) He expects us to do the same.
 - b) He said,

23 "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

– Luke 9.23

V. Jonah believed

- A. that he did not have to do what God said,
- B. if he did not like what God said.
 1. The prophet ran into a storm of troubles because
 2. he resisted the will of God, and
 - a) God put the rebellious prophet
 - b) into what must have been a slimy pit.

VI. God used Jonah at another time

- A. to prophesy that the Lord would restore some of Israel's land, and
- B. it seems that Jonah cooperated that time with the Lord, because
 1. the Lord was doing something
 2. with which the prophet would agree.

a) Second Kings 14 says:

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 Hepher.

– 2 Kings 14.25

b) That means Jonah was from Galilee, 3 miles from Nazareth.

(1) That is significant because

(2) in John 7, when Nicodemus spoke up for Jesus,

(a) Nicodemus's fellow Pharisees said to him:

52 “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”

– John 7.52

(b) They forgot what is in the Bible as we all often do.

VII. The Book of Jonah shows

A. that God cares for all people.

B. Even under the Old Testament,

1. he was not only about Israel.

2. From the beginning God loved the world (John 3.16).

a) Interestingly, the Ninevites repented after one message, whereas,

b) Israel heard thousands, but remained stiff-necked.

VIII. The break down of the chapters is in this manner:

A. Chapter 1: Running from God – Pigheadedness

B. Chapter 2: Running to God – Praying

C. Chapter 3: Running with God – Preaching

D. Chapter 4: Running ahead of God – Pouting

Persuasion:

I. Jonah 1.1–2 • Preach to Nineveh

1 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.”

– Jonah 1.1–2

A. The great city of Nineveh,

1. including suburbs
2. was probably 60 miles circumference,
 - a) with 60’ high walls,
 - b) 1,500 towers,
 - c) 200’ high, and
 - d) 3 chariots wide.

(1) No one was going to bring Nineveh down,

(2) unless the God of heave and earth wanted them removed.

B. Nineveh and the nation of Assyria were perpetual enemies of Israel,

1. eventually destroying the northern kingdom and
2. taking the survivors into captivity.
 - a) Therefore, any Israelite would rejoice over Nineveh’s destruction.
 - b) However, the Ninevites were under God’s care.

C. After 2200 years or so, their wickedness had gone up before God.

1. However, our super gracious God offered them an opportunity to repent.
2. What would they do?

D. The Lord God chose Jonah to go and cry against it.

1. But he did not like the Ninevites.

2. Is there a place where you would not go if the Lord told you to go?
 - a) What if he wanted us to move to Portland?
 - b) What if he wanted us to move to San Francisco?
 - (1) If not, why are we better than Jonah?
 - (2) Are our lives about our will or God's will?

II. Jonah 1.3 • Run from God

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.

– Jonah 1.3

- A. The prophet truly believed that he could flee from God's presence.
 1. Why do people quit the church?
 2. There is either something
 - a) that they do not like or
 - b) that they think is better.
- B. Interestingly,
 1. Jonah went first to Joppa to flee from preaching to Gentiles.
 2. Peter went to Joppa to preach to Gentiles (Acts 10).
- C. Did fleeing God, or attempting to do so,
 1. relinquish his duty and obligation to God?
 - a) Does a runaway cease to be a child of his parents?
 - b) Is an AWOL soldier relieved of responsibility?
 - (1) Likewise, a child of God cannot just quit;
 - (2) thinking such action relieves of his divine responsibilities.
 2. Jonah did not like those people, and
 - a) his hatred of them

- b) for a moment outweighed his love for God.
- D. Why did he go to Tarshish 2,000 miles west in Spain?
- 1. It seems that he had a limited view of God,
 - a) thinking that God was only in Israel, or at the temple, or something.
 - b) Jonah knew that at Tarshish
 - (1) he would not be reminded of God,
 - (2) there would be no temple,
 - (3) no Scriptures,
 - (4) no brethren.
 - 2. Unfortunately, his patriotism overruled his spirituality.

III. Jonah 1.4–10 • Running from God into a Storm of Trouble

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. 5 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. 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." 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. 8 Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" 9 So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

– Jonah 1.4–10

A. 1.4 • God is not a God of the land of Israel only.

- 1. Just like he is not a God of America only.
- 2. Running from God never accomplishes anything.

3. If we can go there, God can go there.

B. 1.5 • Look at the differences between the sailors and the prophet.

1. They feared for their lives.
2. Jonah took a nap.
3. Apostates often see no trouble in their apostasy.

C. 1.6 • See the captain's shock.

1. Jesus slept through a storm (Mark 4.35–38), but
2. he knew that he was in God's hands.
3. Jonah slept because of carelessness.

D. 1.7–8 • The mariners knew that their had to be cause for the storm.

1. It must be that they knew those waters, and
2. a storm like this was not characteristic at that time of year.
 - a) They used lots to find out who was being punished, and
 - b) since God controlled the casting of lots,
 - (1) he made it point to Jonah.
 - (2) So they wanted to know who he was and what he was doing.

E. 1.9 • The confidence of Jonah

1. to bring up the God of heaven,
2. surprises us because
 - a) what he said about God
 - b) contradicted how Jonah was acting.
 - (1) Jonah, if he made the sea and the dry land,
 - (2) why did you think you could flee the God of heaven?
 - (a) Perhaps Jonah thought to himself
 - (b) that God was not concerned with the rest of creation, or
 - i) that God had decided to restrict himself to the land of Israel,

- ii) even as we might be tempted to think he is only here in our building.

F. 1.10 • Reveals further that Jonah explained what he was doing.

1. They were like, What are you doing?
2. They were perhaps amazed that Jonah would so nonchalantly endanger their lives.
 - a) Apostates generally do not care about others;
 - b) only their personal freedom concerns them.

IV. Jonah 1.11–16 • The Sailors Found Peace

11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous. 12 And 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 this great tempest is because of me.” 13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 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.” 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.

– **Jonah 1.11–16**

A. 1.11 • Since they knew

1. that Jonah knew he was the problem,
2. that meant he also knew the solution.

B. 1.12 • Rather than repenting, for

1. that is how much he did not want to go to Nineveh,
2. he said to throw him overboard,
 - a) where he knew that he would die.
 - b) That is not surprising because you will see that at the end of the Book.
 - (1) He would rather die

(2) than be around Ninevites!

C. 1.13–15 • Even the sailors kind of did what Jonah did,

1. refusing to do the right thing, because
2. it seemed hard to them.
 - a) However, doing it their way did not bring success.
 - b) We have to stick with God's original word.

D. 1.16 • However, once they did what they had to do,

1. God stopped the storm and
2. gained new adherents.

V. Jonah 1.17 • From a Storm to a Fish's Belly

17 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.

– Jonah 1.17

A. God prepared a great fish.

1. We do not know what it was.
2. Whale is an unfortunate translation in some versions.

B. In the Book of Jonah, God worked

1. in nature,
2. in a storm,
3. in a fish,
4. in a gourd,
5. in a worm, and
6. in the wind.
 - a) He can use nature against us, or
 - b) he can use it to help us.

- (1) It really comes down to
- (2) whether we cooperate with him.

C. Jonah was there for three days and nights.

1. His stubbornness kept him from repenting
 - a) during a violent storm, and
 - b) in the sea, and
 - c) three days inside an animal!
2. Perhaps like Saul of Tarsus,
 - a) Jonah was basically blind for three days, but
 - b) we will discover it was like Saul of Tarsus again,
 - (1) in that he thought about his situation and
 - (2) he prayed to God.

Exhortation:

I. Jonah shows

- A. that it is easier
 1. to do what is unpleasant
 2. than to run from it.
- B. Remember that we have to face God at the Judgment.

II. God is concerned about those who are away from him,

- A. whether it is a backslider (like Jonah), or
- B. someone who is not a child of God (like the mariners and the Ninevites).

III. Finally, Jesus used Jonah's time in the belly of the great fish

- A. to say that he would have a similar experience:

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in

the heart of the earth.”

– Matthew 12.39–40

4 “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

– Matthew 16.4

B. You can be like Jonah and Jesus

1. not by being in water for three days, but
2. by being buried in water...Romans 6