

# JONAH: RUNNING

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# RUNNING

- Today, we will look at Jonah and how he was “running”.
- In each of the four chapters Jonah “runs” in a different way.
- These are all examples of different seasons or struggles Christians can have.
- Let’s look at Chapter 1 now.

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- **JONAH RUNNING FROM GOD - v. 1-3**

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.  
(Jonah 1-3)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- I recall two other situations of people running away:

And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. (Gen.16:8)

Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. (Genesis 31:30)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- Hagar and Jacob had been abused and hurt and had enough.
- Jonah was running away out of fear, disobedience, and selfishness.

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- **JONAH CAUSING GRIEF FOR OTHERS – v.4-10**

Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.

All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.

- **Jonah sleeping when he should have been praying.**

# Jonah: Running FROM God

The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish." (v.6)

- Jonah was asked to “call on your god”. It is amazing that people have “their gods” but will call on any god in times of trouble.

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- It is also very interesting how JESUS asked His disciple how they could sleep in the Garden of Gethsemane –
- this was a picture of

the devil busy,  
Christ praying,  
and the church sleeping.

# Jonah: Running FROM God

Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" (Jonah 1:7-8)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)  
(Jonah 1:9-10)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- **JONAH PAYING THE CONSEQUENCES –**  
v. 11-17 (see Proverbs 3:11-12)

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." (v.11-12)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land.  
But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder  
than before.

Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not  
let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us  
accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O  
LORD, have done as you pleased." (Jonah 1:13-14)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.

At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:15-17)

# Jonah: Running FROM God

- Now, let's look at Christ referring to Jonah inside the fish three days and three nights.
- He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. (Matt.12:39-41)

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

- In chapter 1 of this book, Jonah tried to run from God.
- After being swallowed by a great fish, Jonah runs back to God.
- He repents.
- Chapter 2, shows us how we should repent, that is, return to God after we have run away from His directions and will for our lives.

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

Repentance is:

**RUNNING BACK TO PRAYER v. 1-3**

- Jonah's prayer life had been in trouble (see Psalm 66:18) because he ran from God.
- Now, Jonah cries out in prayer, returning to his God.

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

- **Jonah's Prayer**

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. (2:1-3)

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

Repentance is:

**RUNNING BACK TO FAITH v. 4-7**

- **Jonah reaffirmed his faith in God, and was confident that God would deliver Him.**

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. (Jonah 2:4-7)

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

Repentance is:

**RUNNING BACK TO CONFESSION v. 8**

- Although the text does not specifically say so, I believe we can assume that Jonah confessed his sin to God (see: Psalm 32:5, 1 John 1:9).
- He acknowledges that those who do wrong have forsaken their own grace (which is from God).

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

- "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. (Jonah 2:8)
- This verse is very revealing for when we hang on to our own idols (anything that we put before God in our heart) we forfeit or lose the grace that could be ours.

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

**Repentance is:**

**RUNNING BACK TO PRAISE Vs. 9a**

**But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. (Jonah 2:9a)**

- **A declaration, a commitment, a determination to do something.**

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

Repentance is:

**RUNNING BACK TO COMMITMENT v.9b**

**What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD."**

- We don't know what the vow was, but we do know that Jonah was now committed to obeying God, and going to Ninevah to preach.

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

- The end result - God set Jonah free from his prison.  
v. 10

And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited  
Jonah onto dry land. (Jonah 2:10)

# Jonah: Running BACK To God

- This is an interesting way to be sent as a missionary.
- Sometimes we lay hands on people, the elders pray for missionaries, and people sing hymns.
- This was Jonah's sending after disobeying: he got vomited onto dry land.
- Even "dry land" must have felt nice to Jonah after all he had been through.

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- Jonah was the  
"Prophet on the Run"!
- After running from God in Chapter 1, and back to God in Chapter 2, he now runs for God.

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- Let's look at a few verses regarding “running for God”.

Paul said, **Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. (1 Cor. 9:26)**

- Paul ran with a purpose, steadfast and purposeful. Why? **I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. (Galatians 2:2)**

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- How should we run?

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- Run in a way that doesn't allow others to deceive you and distract you.

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? (Galatians 5:7)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- Paul considers finishing the race his ultimate goal.

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. (Acts 20:24)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- And here is Paul's testimony:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)

Now, let's return to our chapter on "Running for God" in Jonah.

# Jonah: Running FOR God

## CHANGED SERVANT - v. 1-3

- Jonah's attitude and willingness to obey had changed.
- He was now ready to do as God had instructed.

# Jonah: Running FOR God

## Jonah Goes to Nineveh

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:

"Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh.

Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. (Jonah 3:1-3)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

## CLEAR SERMON - v. 4

- His message short, simple, and powerful. Ninevah would be destroyed in 40 days.

On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." (Jonah 3:4)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

- We are reminded of another time when the Israelites in the desert were running away from God and running to sin.
- Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. (Exodus 32:25)
- And that day instead of receiving the 10 commandments and God's law; three thousand died that day.

# Jonah: Running FOR God

## CONVICTED SINNERS - v. 5-9

- Everyone from the king down repented.

The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.  
(Jonah 3:5-6)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." (Jonah 3:7-9)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

## CORRECTED SITUATION - v. 10

- Ninevah repented.
- God spared the city.

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. (Jonah 3:10)

# Jonah: Running FOR God

Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion.

For the LORD is a God of justice.

Blessed are all who wait for him! (Isaiah 30:18)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

Jonah Chapter 4:

Running AGAINST God

- Jonah was the prophet on the run.
- In chapter 1 he ran away from God.
- In chapter 2 he ran back to God.
- In chapter 3 he ran for God.
- In chapter 4 he ran against God.

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

## JONAH'S FIGHT

- God was not fighting Jonah, but Jonah was fighting God.
- God did not destroy Ninevah, and that's what Jonah wanted.
- Because Ninevah repented, God did not destroy the city at that time.

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 1. His Displeasure v. 1

**But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.**  
(Jonah 4:1)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 2. His Complaint v. 2

He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. (Jonah 4:2)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 3. His Request v. 3
- Jonah makes a rash request to die, because he is not getting his way.

Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4:3)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 4. His Watch v. 5
- Jonah is watching to see if God will change his mind and destroy Ninevah.
- God had already said He wouldn't.

Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city.

There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. (Jonah 4:5)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- GOD'S RESPONSE
- 1. His Question. v. 4

But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" (Jonah 4:4)

- God asks Jonah if he is doing the right thing by getting angry.
- The right answer, of course, is "no".

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 2. His Object Lesson v. 5-9
- God provides Jonah a fast growing vine that protects him from the heat. God sends a worm to destroy the vine, and Jonah is angry and ready again to die.

Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. (Jonah 4:5-6)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered.

When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." (Jonah 4:7-9)

# Jonah: Running AGAINST God

- 3. His Explanation v. 10-11
- God explains that Jonah cared about the vine that was there for a day and gone for a day. Jonah had done no labor to receive the blessing of the vine.

**But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (Jonah 4:10-11)**

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- **MAIN LESSON:**
- If Jonah so pities a plant which cost him no toil to rear, and which is so short lived and valueless, much more must Jehovah pity those hundreds of thousands of immortal men and women in great Nineveh whom He has made with such a display of creative power, especially when many of them repent, and seeing that, if all in it were destroyed, "more than six score thousand" of unoffending children, besides "much cattle," would be involved in the common destruction. (see Gen.18:23-33).

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- A similar illustration from the insignificance of a plant, which **"to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven,"** and which, nevertheless, is clothed by God with surpassing beauty, is given by Christ to prove that God will care for the infinitely more precious bodies and souls of men who are to live for ever (Matthew 6:28-30).
- One soul is of more value than the whole world; surely, then, one soul is of more value than many gourds.

## Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- The point of comparison spiritually is the need which Jonah, for the time being, had of the foliage of the gourd.
- However he might dispense with it at other times, now it was necessary for his comfort, and almost for his life.
- So now that Nineveh, as a city, fears God and turns to Him, God's cause needs it, and would suffer by its overthrow, just as Jonah's material well-being suffered by the withering of the gourd.

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- Regarding “much cattle”--God cares even for the brute creatures, of which man takes little account. These in wonderful powers and in utility are far above the shrub which Jonah is so concerned about.
- Yet Jonah is reckless as to their destruction and that of innocent children. The abruptness of the close of the book is more strikingly suggestive than if the thought had been followed out in detail.

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- **THOUGHTS:** Christian ministry can have “highs/lows”, “ups/downs”, and often we can feel despondent, proud, etc. after a mountain top experience.
- Things will not work out the way **WE THINK THEY SHOULD**. God is in control and will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. Our job is to allow God to be God, respect His ways, and trust Him!!

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- **REMEMBER:** Matthew 20:1-16 about the landowner who went out and hired men to work in the vineyard.
- He went out different times of the day and hired people agreeing to pay them a set amount.
- At the end of the day, he paid them for their work.

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- But some complained saying, 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' " But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' (Matt.20:12-15)

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- God has the right to do what he wants with His own money.
- He is not being “unfair” but He decided to be “generous” to those not deserving “generosity”.
- Yes, the Ninevites didn’t deserve God’s grace, but can’t God be generous to who He wants to be.

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- **Finally:**

**Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!'**

**Do not go running off after them. (Luke 17:23)**

- **Don't run after those "claiming to be the Christ. But run towards the "resurrected" Christ. The One Who has Power over Death!! The One Who left an empty tomb!!! The One Who has All Power!! The One Who Lives Forever and Ever!!**

# Jonah: Prophet on the Run

- **LET'S PRAY:**