

Jonah 1.3-17 | Running from God : Sin
Redemption Hill Church | Simon Murphy
31st May 2009

Read Jonah 1.3-17 and Romans 1.21-23 and Isaiah 53.6

Overview of Story: Gods Sovereign call to Him because of Gods love for Nineveh. We see Gods heart on display, cities and for people. We often pray to God for Him to do work, but in the gospels when Jesus sees people harassed and helpless without a shepherd he says we must ask God to **thrust out laborers**. We try and avoid the issue, **but Jesus said 'Here I am..'**

Jonah was an ordinary believer and when the test came he can't pass it.

But God does place demands on our lives for a purpose. And he's calling some of you today. Will you run? **This is sin.**

1. Why did he run? (Vs 2, Ch 4)

Fear of losing control: In some ways it's justified, (he is asked to go to Al Qaeda) but He is looking at the problems, not God. When we see God in His glory our problems seem to fade away. What if God me to India? This is ultimately a lack of faith!

Bachelor movie - not being able to commit. At the point of commitment he can't do it.

Romans 1.21-23 tells us that the root of all running is a failure to honor and worship God. So we exchange the glory of God for something small, created, manageable, in our own sphere. And put ourselves in His place and end up losing God!

Jonah fails to trust God for his promises, that He is good and will take care of us. **Fear of man**, what will my colleagues / family think of me? Jesus supersedes family / colleagues. Our culture of honoring family is awesome but it cannot supersede our honor of God. **This is sin! It's wicked! It defames God, and calls Him a liar.**

Self righteousness: we think we are better than others. They don't deserve it!

2. How did he run?

.3: Firstly he rose to flee from the presence of the Lord. This is where we flee first. What is the presence of the Lord? It's the conscious presence of God who is leading, guiding and speaking. Many **faithfully attend church** but you are running from His presence. From God being able to tell you what to do, from God convicting sin in your life.

.3: He had opportunity - not providence. We don't just serve God by our circumstances. There is always a ship! This is not a sign of Gods endorsement.

Jonah ran by being bad: It's full on rebellion. Trying to get attention by running, showing how strong you feel about your situation, often also a cry for attention and to be loved.

But you can also run by being good: Prodigal sons. We run by becoming self righteous instead of humbly trusting in Jesus. We think we are superior and this is a form of running. We trust in our own situation and goodness. It keeps us from Jesus, and it is running, **and it's sin.**

We do it because **we feel that we must be better or superior** to someone else in order to feel better about ourselves (trusting in our own works salvation). In order to do that we compare ourselves and look for areas of superiority. You can look down on others. **"At least I am not.."**

You could be racist and look down on others or hate racism and look down on racists!
Rich looking down on poor or you could be poor and look down on the rich!
You could be religious and look down on wicked, or wicked and look down on religious bigots.
You could have life all together and look down on the messed up, or vice versa.
You could have your families approval and look down on those who don't or vice versa.
What do you do to feel better about yourself? Is it the gospel? Or you're avoiding Jesus!

Prodigal son – religion runs from God by pretending all is well. But religion devalues God, makes Him small and pathetic, because we have exchanged the Glory of God.

.5: Jonah sleeping: Avoid! Or we run by being absent, like busyness, or family, or a cause, or future preparation, all noble things. But they are excuses to run from God.

"I am Jonah". I run in busyness. Keep myself so busy that I don't have time to stop and think and let God speak to me and challenge me. **"We are Jonah"**.

3. Results of his running

There is a price attached to fleeing from the Lord. There is a physical cost and a spiritual cost.

.3: It blinds him: Deceived! Thinks he can run from God, like Adam. Rom 1 'became futile'.

.3: Costs him money. Sin isn't free. There is always a cost. We move towards death.

.4: God sends a storm. There is a lag time storm that will catch up with you. It's sowing to the Spirit and flesh - there is a reaping. When God open the taps, things change quick.

.4: It nearly kills the sailors. Sins affect others, not just us. We must be careful who we get into business with. It costs them their cargo - great financial cost. Proverbs ..wicked man.

.8: It ruins his testimony and reputation with the sailors.

.12: The result of our running is ultimately death, which is what happens, and Jonah gets thrown overboard. "The wages of sin is death". Our sin cannot be helped apart from death.

Hebrews: ***"without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins"***. PAUSE

In Matthew 12 Jesus compares Himself to Jonah.. 'just as Jonah..' Jesus also dies for sins, because of running away from God, **Isaiah 53.6: But not his own sins,** not his own running.

Jesus never ran. In the garden he wanted to run, but he never ran. He said "if it possible" yet not my will but your will be done. He didn't run but went to the cross, obediently. So we don't need to run any more.

Jesus is the true and better Jonah who didn't run but obeyed God, and did spend three days in the belly of the earth and who purchased our salvation. And as he hung on the cross he calls out to you and I that we should stop running from Him, and run to Him. His love demonstrated on the cross reminds us that He is good and we can trust Him.

Two types: Some of you are running from Jesus as Saviour, as Lord, and God has a city to reach, purposes to fulfill, and we are to come to Him as our good God and Saviour this morning, and say, like Jesus "A body you have prepared for me, I have come to do your will, O God".