

JONAH: RUNAWAY PROPHET
FINAL THOUGHTS ON JONAH

Saturday, July 18

Reading: Romans 10:9-17

Romans 10:13 *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

What are some final lessons we can take away from the book of Jonah? First, this book should make us see if we have any power struggles with God. The whole reason Jonah ran away and later pouted like a little child was because he didn't get his way! He wanted the people of Nineveh to die! And knowing the character of God, the prophet did everything he could to force God to do things HIS way. If we have truly been forgiven and redeemed, then we should not have this kind of struggle with God's will. Unfortunately, our human ego and pride often get in the way and, like Jonah, we end up disobeying and running from God! Yet, it is still true that God disciplines His children to bring them back to Himself! God is the God of second chances. If nothing else, the experiences of Jonah should teach us that we could avoid a lot of trouble and heartache if we just obeyed God the first time!

Another powerful lesson illustrated in the book of Jonah relates to God's call on us personally and to His church as a whole. Our God is a "Missionary God!" We are called to bring the gospel message to the world! Romans 10 dramatically describes this mission. However, we often prefer to stay in our "holy huddle." We want to stay in the safe confines of the church building and focus on programs, budgets, and church socials. Our traditions and customs become more important than answering God's call to reach the world for Christ. As Pastor Lloyd Ogilvie put it:

"Either our congregations are in mission or they are still a mission field...The gospel is not our private possession. Evangelism and mission are not an aspect of a well-rounded congregational program; they are the reason for all we do in worship, education, and fellowship."¹

Is the gospel the central focus of your church?

Is it the goal of your life in your community and world?

Or are you like Jonah and doing everything you can to avoid answering God's call to share the gospel?

How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in?
And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?
As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
(Romans 10:14-15)

¹ Lloyd J. Ogilvie. The Preacher's Commentary Vol 22: Hosea / Joel/ Amos /Obadiah / Jonah, p. 449