

JONAH: RUNAWAY PROPHET

WHO ARE YOU?

Friday, June 26

Reading: Jonah 1:7-10

Jonah 1:9 *He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.*

The sailors believe that this storm is a sign from some deity and that it must be someone's fault (and they are right). To determine who the guilty party is they use the ancient method of casting lots – a practice believed to show the will of the gods. Even the Jewish people used this method from time to time

The lot is cast in the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord (Proverbs 16:33)

After the lot falls on Jonah, the sailors question the prophet about his identity, trying to determine what they need to do to be saved from destruction in the storm. The answer to these questions would reveal Jonah's occupation and nationality. They would give the sailors a picture of who Jonah really was and why this storm was his fault.

It is interesting that Jonah answers the second part of their questions first. He begins by telling them he is a Hebrew. This hints at the fact that his nationality was of most importance to him. That is why he was willing to disobey God's command and why he seems reluctant to even talk with these heathen sailors.

Jonah's next statement also reveals the depths of his disobedience. "I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." While Jonah's description of God is accurate, in his own heart Jonah doubted it! If the prophet really believed in his God, why did he try to run away? Why is he even now putting his nationality above his obedience to God?

The sailor's questions are intriguing. When someone asks "Who are you?", how do you respond? In what do you find your identity?

1. "What kind of work do you do?" – This is about OCCUPATION. For some, their job is how they identify themselves. It is what makes them who they are!
2. "Where do you come from?" – This is about FAMILY. Some find their identity in their heritage and family relations. Family legacy and name is what is important.
3. "What is your country?" – This is about NATIONALITY. People sometimes define who they are by their nation or political affiliations.
4. "From what people are you?" – This is about COMMUNITY. Some find their identity in their community status. Their friends are what makes them who they are. Their community reputation is the most important thing to them.

While all these things help shape who we are, it is missing the most important ingredient: Who we are in Christ! Jonah missed a great opportunity to share about the true God with these pagan sailors. His words were not backed up by his actions. His identity as a prophet of God was contradicted by his life.

How about you? Does your life display that you are a follower of Jesus?

When people look at you, what would they say is the most important thing in your life – what makes you who you are?

What might you need to do to change these perceptions to make Christ first in your life, identity, and actions?