

# ***“You Can Run but You Can’t Hide!”***

**Jonah 1:1-17**

**Intro.** – Do you remember in the Spring of 1982, then President Reagan sent troops into the Falkland Islands to rescue American citizens from hostilities? Keep this in mind as I relay the following to you.

In April of 1982, a young married couple living in the state of Washington, had gotten to the point where they were fed up. I didn’t get the detail behind their discontent, but, between the two of them they had had enough; so, steps were made to change things. Find the perfect spot to “get away from it all,” this couple put everything they owned up for sale. It all sold quickly; so, they readied themselves for their perfect “get away from it all” spot. Guess where their *happiness haven* was located? The Falkland Islands – they arrived one week before US troops were deployed. Of this couple, a famous radio commentator, Paul Harvey, began using a common phrase: *You can run but you can’t hide*. And now you know the rest of the story.

A better illustration of this principle is found in our text. Jonah, the prophet of God, tried to run, but, he quickly learned he could not hide. There were at least three principles concerning God that Jonah learned he could not escape. From these three principles we learn the parallels between Jonah and ourselves as being nothing short of astounding.

*Purpose: to look at three principles we must learn from Jonah*

These three principles applied to our lives with enable us to live more Godly lives in response to the grace God has given to each of us. These three principles will enable us to grow more mature in our worship/service. Here are the three principles Jonah learned he could not escape:

## **I The PRESENCE of God**

### **A. The Word of the Lord Came**

1. The Word came to Jonah:
  - direct revelation which was a common means of communicating prior to Scripture...
2. The Word comes to us:
  - a. direct revelation ceased with the coming completed Scriptures (1 Corinthians 13:8 etc.)
  - b. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 makes clear Scriptures are *complete* and *final*: “*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*”
  - c. the Word of the Lord has come to us... therefore, we are under just as much obligation to listen and obey as was Jonah...

### **B. The Charge of the Lord is Clear**

1. Jonah was told to go to “*Nineveh the great city.*”
  - a. Jonah was to preach relational sermons, nothing doctrinal or negative, and emphasize the likes rather than the differences... NO – he was to “*cry against it*” seeking to bring to repentance...
  - b. consistent with running theme of Bible = 2 Peter 3:9 “*...God desires that none would perish but for all to come to repentance.*”
2. We, servants of the Lord, have our “*Nineveh*”
  - a. God has called each of us to *seek and save the lost*
  - b. God wants us to have compassion and burden for souls as He does... as God desires none to perish, He would have us do likewise = to desire that none would perish!
  - c. this was the last instruction given by our Lord = Matthew 28:18-20 = “*...make disciples*”...
3. As there were two courses open to Jonah (*Nineveh* being God’s way and *Tarshish* being rebel’s way) so there are two courses for you and me... for this local church...
  - a. *Nineveh* = “*Have it God’s Way*”
  - b. *Tarshish* = “*Have it Your Way*” i.e. *The Burger King Way*

How utterly foolish to think one can run and hide from the presence of God!

## **II The AUTHORITY of God**

- to whom shall we grant the right to rule over us; to submit our wills/minds, to determine right/wrong?

#### A. Jonah Sought Self-Rule

1. Told sailors he was fleeing from God's presence...
2. Storm ragged... lots were cast and lot fell on Jonah:
  - a. v 9 "*I fear the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and dry land.*"
  - b. after attempting to "*row against God*" – crew threw Jonah, upon his instructions, overboard.
  - c. v 16 the crew "*feared God greatly, offered a sacrifice and vows*"
3. Point is simply this: Jonah's life got complicated when he ignored God!!!

#### B. We Have Sought Self-Rule

1. In short, we run from God's presence and seek self-rule by running from His authority:
  - a. local churches = enthralled with impressing rather than serving... these are jumping on the bandwagon of pragmatism (if it works then, let truth and God's authority be forgotten...)
  - b. families/homes = reflect self-rule and running from God's authority... marriages are in shambles (self-centeredness)... young people not being given a home where Christ is Head and dad/mom are examples; instead, kids rule!...
  - c. individuals = self-rule and gratification = rule rather than exception today...

Fact is, Jesus is Lord, His Word is final, getting into the Word is imperative! We can run but we can't hide!

### III The PURPOSE of God

#### A. Jonah Went to Nineveh

1. After three days of "soul searching" in the stomach of a great fish, Jonah repented... -- Jonah instructed again to go to Nineveh and this time he in fact goes!
2. The *sign of Jonah* was given to them = testimony of his disobedience to God and the resulting encounter with a prepared large fish... three nights in its belly and pray, fasting and repentance...
3. Jonah appealed to Nineveh on a very personal level to repent and avert imminent destruction!

#### B. We Must Go to Our Nineveh

1. Luke 11:29-30 "*...This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation.*"
2. Our "Nineveh" is a generation seeking the spectacular... happiness... gratification..., but Jesus says the only sign provided is the resurrection of Jesus and what a sign that is!
3. We ask, what does the world have to offer that is better than the hope/promise found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? ...
4. We have what this ole' world needs!! = the very PURPOSE of God!
5. To get wrapped up in "another purpose, another cause" is trying to run and hide from God's purpose – something with which all struggle...
  - how we all need to exchange even good purposes for the BEST PURPOSE!

**Conclusion:** "Your name please," asked the registration officer.

"Matilda Brown," answered the woman.

"And your age?" he continued.

"Have the Hill sisters next door given you their ages?" she responded.

"No," said the registrar.

"Well, then, I'm the same age as they."

"That will do," said the registrar as he continued taking down the information and speaking out loud – "Matilda Brown, age – as old as the Hills."

You can run, but you can't hide! I pray today, we have had confirmed and/or reaffirmed that God's presence is unquestionable... His authority is second to none... and His purpose must ever be our purpose. Why? You can run, but you can't hide!