

CATCH AND RELEASE

Jonah 1:4-17

June 14, 2009 Sunday am

INTRODUCTION

- A. "Yom Kippur" is the Jewish holiday called, "The Day of Atonement". Among other things that are done on this special holy day, the book of Jonah is read by practicing Jews.
 - 1. No one quite knows why Jonah is read on the Day of Atonement.
 - 2. One Jewish teacher says its because the story of Jonah is more about repentance than it is about the big fish.
 - 3. Another Jewish teacher explains that Jonah is evidence that no one can run from God forever.
 - 4. Still another explanation is that Jonah tells us to what lengths God will go to get us back.
- B. Have you, like Jonah, been running from God?
 - 1. This may mean you have never known God personally.
 - 2. Or this may mean you know God, but you have drifted away from Him.
 - 3. The story of Jonah tells us what God is willing to do in order to get us back.

I. WHAT IS GOD WILLING TO DO TO GET US BACK?

Let's see several ways in Jonah, but know that these are examples of God's correction, not His punishment.

- A. One way God corrects is to send storms.
 - 1. God sent a storm in Jonah's life—1:4.
 - 2. Sometimes God must "shake" us in order to "wake" us.
 - 3. Not all storms are from God, but we should always ask if He is saying something to us.
- B. Another way God corrects is to touch someone close to us.
 - 1. It was Jonah who sinned, but the sailors suffered too—1:5.
 - 2. This reminds us that when we sink our boat with sin, we may take others down with us too.
 - 3. The storm that touches our life, touches others too.
- C. Still another way God corrects is to send someone to us.
 - 1. God sent someone to Jonah—1:6.
 - 2. God can speak to us through a loved one or even a stranger.
 - 3. The question isn't how God speaks, but what is our response.
- D. Sometimes God corrects by removing his hand of protection—1:17.
 - 1. His hand of protection can also become the hand of correction.
 - 2. Why would God correct us? Because he loves us too much to allow us to keep running from Him.
 - 3. His correction is another expression of His love.

II. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO GOD'S CORRECTION?

- A. First, admit you've been running from God—1:10.
- B. Second, repent of running from God—2:1.
- C. Third, start obeying God again—3:1-3.

CONCLUSION

- A. Are you running from God? Or have you slowly drifted away from Him?
- B. Listen to what Max Lucado says we must do: **"If there are 1000 steps between you and God, God will take 999 of them and leave the last one for you."**
- C. Will you take that last step toward God?