

Old Testament Lessons

Jonah & The Fish

(Jh 1:3)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Good to see everyone one here once again.
2. Series: "Old Testament Lessons"
 - a. We've looked at lessons from...
 - i. The flood, Ezra, & the Tower of Babel
 - b. This evening we will look at Jonah & The Fish
3. The outline:
 - a. Chapter 1 = Jonah fleeing from God
 - i. He is told to go preach to Nineveh.
 - ii. He refuses and tries to run away by boat.
 - iii. A storm arises and Jonah is thrown overboard.
 - iv. He is swallowed by a great fish.
 - b. Chapter 2 = Jonah's prayer and deliverance
 - i. Jonah gives prayer to God.
 - ii. God hears Jonah's prayer and the fish spits up Jonah in Nineveh (basically)
 - c. Chapter 3 = Jonah preaching to Nineveh
 - i. Jonah preached death and destruction to Nineveh.
 - ii. Nineveh repented to God.
 - d. Chapter 4 = Jonah's mad that God didn't destroy Nineveh
 - i. Jonah argues with God.
 - ii. He wishes to even die.
 - iii. God shows His wisdom and mercy to Jonah about Nineveh.
4. Let us examine some lessons from this biblical account.

I. You Can't Run From God

- A. Jonah tried to run from God
 1. God gave Jonah a job, but Jonah didn't want to do it.
 - i. So he up an ran from God.
 2. He gets on a ship.
 - i. He hides underneath the ship.
 3. God knows where Jonah is the whole time.
- B. Jonah was under God's observation all along
 1. God sees all things and He knows our hearts at all times.
 - i. **Jb 34:21** "For His eyes are on the ways of man, And He sees all his steps."
 - ii. **Pr 15:3** "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good."
 - iii. **He 4:13** "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

- iv. **Rv 2:23** "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
2. There is no place that we can hide from Him.

II. You Can't Run From Your Own Problems

- A. Jonah had a problem
 1. The people of Nineveh were the enemies of Israel.
 2. And Jonah didn't want to preach to his enemies.
 3. The problem was of Jonah's own making.
 4. So, he tried to run away from it.
- B. Jonah really created his own problem (his solution, to just not deal with it)
 1. How many times in our life do we create our own problems?
 - i. **Ga 6:7** "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."
 2. We will be held responsible for what we do with the problems we create.
 - i. **Ro 14:12** "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."
 3. It is better to resolve our problems now with the help of God's Word, than let God resolve them in the day of judgment with his divine justice.
 - i. **Jn 12:48** "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."
 4. God resolved Jonah's problems for him, but it wasn't according to Jonah's desires.
 - i. **I Co 11:32** "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."
 - ii. **He 12:11** "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

III. God's Mercy Can Be Rejected

- A. By refusing God's word, Jonah found himself in the belly of a great fish
 1. Jonah realized he was lying to himself thinking he could outrun God.
 2. He also then realized that to believe a lie is to forsake God's mercy.
 3. So Jonah prayed to God to deliver him..
 4. Jonah was then vomited out by the fish onto the shore.

- B. How often do we reject God's word and therefore also reject God's mercy?
 - 1. There are those that love lies more than truth.
 - i. **II Th 2:10-12** "and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 2. Brothers and sisters we cannot afford to reject the truth.
 - i. If we do we reject our own freedom.
 - a. **Jn 8:32** "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - ii. Freedom from the stench & vile nature of sin.

IV. Prejudices Must Not Interfere In Preaching God's Word

- A. Jonah was prejudiced against the people of Nineveh
 - 1. He didn't want to preach to them, so he ran.
 - 2. God called him back to do the job he was asked to do.
- B. God is not a respecter of persons ie show favoritism.
 - 1. **Ac 10:34-35** "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."
 - 2. **Ja 2:8-9** "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors."
- C. We must teach the Word of God to everyone
 - 1. **Mk 16:15-16** "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
 - 2. **Mt 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

V. When God's Word Is Preached, Honest Hearts Will Repent

- A. Jonah finally went to Nineveh
 - 1. When he got there he said, in 40 days Nineveh would be destroyed.
 - i. That was the extent of his preaching.
 - ii. It wasn't a "positive" message, but it had positive results.
 - iii. The people of Nineveh believed God and repented.

- B. Today we have "good news" to preach, but not everything in the gospel is positive
 - 1. The gospel/good news is that we don't have to suffer condemnation.
 - i. **I Co 15:1-4** "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"
 - ii. This is good and positive but we must be ready to give a defense to those that sin which is more often than not negative.
 - 2. Paul warned Felix of judgment.
 - i. **Ac 24:25** "Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.""
 - 3. Jude wanted to preach positively but was compelled by God otherwise.
 - i. **Jd 3** "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."
 - 4. Many will reject that good news but honest hearts will obey it.
 - i. **Lk 8:12, 15** "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."
- C. The people of Nineveh repented because they had honest hearts

VI. We Should Be Happy When People Turn To God

- A. After Jonah saw the repentance of the Ninevites, he sulked.
 - 1. Jonah wasn't very happy that his enemies repented and were spared.
 - 2. He even wished to die.
 - 3. So God prepared a plant to give Jonah shade, then He took it away.
 - 4. God taught Jonah that he should not to be upset over something that doesn't belong to him.
- B. The souls of men belong to God who created them
 - 1. God wants those souls to be saved.
 - i. **II Pt 3:9** "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

2. When the unrighteous are saved the angels rejoice.
 - i. **Lk 15:10** "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
3. Brethren let us rejoice over those that are saved regardless of who they may be.

CONCLUSION

1. It doesn't make since to try and "run from" God.
 - a. He sees all.
2. It doesn't make since to try and "be angry with God."
 - a. He knows all.
3. It doesn't make since to be disobedient to God.
 - a. He is just and must judge us all.
4. With that in mind I hope each us this evening are being obedient to God.
 - a. Who is all in all.
5. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study God's Word **Ro 10:17; II Ti 2:15**
 - ii. Believe In Jesus As The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent Giving Your Life To Christ **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Your Lord **Mt 10:32; Ro 10:9**
 - v. Be Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - vi. Strive For Perfection In Righteousness **Mt 5:48; I Jn 1:7**