

JONAH: UNSTOPPABLE GRACE

Jonah 1 – “Come Sail Away”

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I think we have all been in situations where we have wanted to run away or hide. (*Story: Sizakele hiding from Grandma on Easter.*) Today we are going to talk about a man who did not want to face the task he was called to do, so he tried to hide and then he flat out ran away.

I. A LITTLE BACKGROUND (the book of Jonah)

A. Jonah = dove.

B. Theories about why we have this book:

- i. Allegory
- ii. Parable
- iii. Actual historical narrative

C. When did Jonah live?

- i. Jonah is mentioned as an actual prophet in 2 Kings 14:25. We will get to what that's about later, but according to this Word from God, he would have lived during Jeroboam II's reign, which was about the years 793-753 Before Christ.

D. Canonization and Confirmation

- i. Jonah fit with eleven other “minor prophets” (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Michah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) on one synagogue scroll.
- ii. Jonah is read during the afternoon service of Yom Kippur right after the reading of Leviticus 18.
- iii. Other writings mention Jonah: 3 Maccabees 6:8, and Tobit 14:4, 8.
- iv. Jesus mentions Jonah twice in Matthew and once in Luke.

II. THE WORD OF THE LORD (1:1-2)

- We see grace in abundance here in the book of Jonah. And the first way that we see grace is that God gives Jonah a word.
- The Bible records only one other word of God given to Jonah. [2 Kings 14:25 – “He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, from Gath Hepher.”]

- There's not a great modern-day equivalent for this, but let's say this: let's say you were called to get to North Korea, however you could, and tell them to repent because God was getting ready to destroy North Korea.
- Wait just a minute! Didn't North Korea just threaten us? Why should I warn them? I want North Korea to languish a little bit, not repent!

III. HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION (1:3)

Jonah decides he's going to move in the opposite direction, and move himself "out" of the Lord's presence. And he goes down, down, down...

Maybe you've tried to hide from God. Maybe that's why you're here.

Guess what? You will likely be tempted, throughout your life, to run and hide from God.

IV. STORM SURGE (1:4-14)

- The storm is about to break the ship apart.
- The storm terrifies the crew, but Jonah is asleep!
- How many times are we asleep in situations where we should be awake (or "woke")?

V. HOW GOD TURNS US AROUND (1:15-17)

- A. He reminds us of whose and who we are (1:8-10)
- B. He sends people to help us (1:6, 1:8, 1:13, 1:15)
- C. He hurls a storm over our lives to wake us up. (1:4)
 - Some of us need to get rid of the storm makers in our lives.
- D. He arranges alternative transportation. (1:17)

VI. HOW CAN THIS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE?

- I know that you are here and so you've made a lot of steps in the right direction, but... are you still running from God? Are you hiding from Him, worried that what you know He wants you to do it too much for you to handle?
- Are you afraid?
- Do you still harbor some sort of hatred, unforgiveness, something in your heart that would keep you from blessing others in the name of Jesus?
- You don't have to be thrown overboard!!!