

Running Away

Jonah Series

May 17, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament book of Jonah is often viewed as a children's Sunday school story, but it is relevant for us today, because God asked Jonah to do something that he really didn't want to. Likewise for us, there have been times when we were asked to do something we didn't want to – professionally, socially and by loved ones. There may also be times when God asks us to do some things that we don't want to do. When those times come, what will we do? Will stay and obey, or will we run away?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In his mind, Jonah had legitimate reasons for not wanting to preach God's Word to the Ninevites. What are some things that God asks us to do that seem unreasonable or too difficult? Describe a time when you disobeyed God's direction and faced the consequences.
2. As you examine your spiritual your life, which direction would you say that you are running: towards God, away from God or with God? Share a time when you thought you could ignore or run from God? Where did you end up? What does our running from God reveal about our concept of God?
3. Read Jonah 1:4-6. What kind of storms has God used in the past or the present to get your attention? What did your storm reveal to you? How long did it take for you to have a change of heart?
4. Read Jonah 1:7-10. How does our disobedience affect the people around us? Please share of a time when others were affected by you running from God. Conversely, how did your actions draw others closer to Him?
5. Read Jonah 1:11-16. How did God use the storm to grab the attention of the sailors? What affect did God's stilling the storm have on the sailors? How did God use the storm to turn the sailors and Jonah back to him?

CONCLUSION

There will be times will be times when we'll come face-to-face with some "*Then the Lord...*" moments (Jonah 1:4), where God does something drastic to get our full and undivided attention. But at the same time, there are also those "*Now the Lord...*" moments (Jonah 1:17), where our Heavenly Father extends His loving arms to welcome and usher and carry us back home. We all run from God, but the good news for us today is that no matter where how far we've run, it is never too late to quit running from God.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."
– Jonah 1:1-2