

Big Lessons from Jonah

July 2, 2023

Main Passage: The book of Jonah

1. Running from God is _____

Jonah 1:1-5b, NIV – 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.” But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord. Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

Isaiah 26:3, NLT – You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

1 Corinthians 10:24, NIV – No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

2. If I'm not dead, _____

Jonah 1:17-2:1, NIV – Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God.

Jonah 1:17 (NIV – Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah...)

Proverbs 20:30, GNT – Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways!

Jonah 2:2, 5-7, 9b NIV – He said: “In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry... The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down... But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit.

When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple... What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’”

Jonah 2:7, NIV – When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you...

Jonah 2:10, NIV – The Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

3. The work was _____

Jonah 3:4-5, NIV – Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.’ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

John 15:16, LB – [Jesus said,] “You didn’t choose me! I chose you! I appointed you to go and produce lovely fruit always, so that no matter what you ask for from the Father, using my name, he will give it to you.”

4. God wants _____

Jonah 4:2, NLT – So [Jonah] complained to the Lord... “Didn’t I say before I left home that you would do this, Lord? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people.”

1 John 3:18, LB – Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.

1 Timothy 2:4, NLT – [God] wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

Acts 10:35 (NLT – In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.

Revelation 7:9a, NLT – After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb.

Reflection: Am I running? If so, what's it costing me and others to run from God? If God helped Jonah escape the fish, do I believe he can help me now? If I'm trying to do the work only God can do in my life (or in the life of others), then how I can surrender that work to him? Am I allowing God to use my life to make heaven crowded? Who do I need to start praying for and talking to about Jesus? To whom can I “share the reason for the hope” I have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15)?