

The Prodigal Preacher

Jonah 1:1-16

Introduction:

1. Prodigal son
 2. Prodigal's brother
 3. Prodigal's father
 4. This lesson talks about the Prodigal preacher.
 5. Prodigal-reckless, wasteful, throwing away
- I. Four reasons why I believe the Book of Jonah is true, factual and credible.
- A. Presented as history in the exactly the same form and speech as in other book of history (Kings, Chronicles, etc.). They describe real people, real events, real places, and in the same tone, in the same manner and same language. The book is presented as a slice of history and all the places, people and events are actual and factual places.
 - B. Jonah is mentioned elsewhere in the inspired record of God's Word
 1. In the book of Kings (he has the same father in Kings as he does in the Book of Jonah-Amittai; 2 Kings 14:24). He is presented there as an ordinary person.
 2. Those who see the book of Jonah as fantasy and not factual accept him as real in 2 Kings but not in the Book of Jonah. That does not make sense!
 - C. The Jews always accepted Jonah as history.
 1. From the very beginning they always accepted that they were reading about a real person.
 2. They did not like him because of his mission, but they accepted him as a real person.
 - D. He is mentioned by the Lord Jesus himself, and the Lord Jesus taught about Jonah as an illustration and allusion about His own burial and resurrection (Matthew 12:40).
 1. One of the things that Jesus said about those that refuse Christ now will one day meet the men of Nineveh who will point at them and say, "We repented even before Jesus came, we repented over Jonah. Why did you not repent over Jesus?"
 2. (Matthew 12:41)
- II. The whole message of Jonah changes if we treat it as fiction:
- A. If we treat it as fiction then the main figure is Jonah
 - B. If we treat it as fact then the main figure is God!
- III. This book is primarily about God and what He does, and this book is written about what God did and who God is.
- IV. It is a book of GREATS!
- A. The great storm
 - B. The great fish
 - C. The great city
- V. The Prodigal preacher: Jonah, the prodigal's progress, the runaway preacher, the man who would not do what God wanted him to do
- A. Step of disobedience: all trouble of this kind begins with that single step.
 1. God has every right to demand of Jonah to do and go where He wants him to go.
 2. He is a preacher of righteousness, he is God's prophet, he is God's preacher, he is in the service of the Lord. Whether he wants to or not.
 3. **One of the subtle temptations every preacher has is to never preach against anything or anyone. Only to preach for things and for people.**
 - a) 2 Timothy 4:3; "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine."

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- b) "Go...and preach against it, because..." (Jonah 1:1) Jonah 1:3 says that "he ran away from the Lord" (NIV), "...from the presence of the Lord" (NASB/ESV), "in the opposite direction in order to get away from the Lord" (GNT); Jonah knew he could not flee from God, much less hide from Him. What this phrase means is that Jonah was attempting to get as far away as he could from where God tabernacled in the temple in Jerusalem. When we rebel against God and are in sin, church is the last place we want to be in, and therefore we absent ourselves from our church family (Hebrews 10:24-25) because of the guilt that we feel. The same is true in the parable of the prodigal son, the left to a far away country, as far as he could go from his father's house because of his rebellion. Invariably a man at odds with God is at odds with God's people. Invariably we don't want to go near church, we want to go in the opposite direction. Invariably we don't even want to go near where Christians will be when we are at odds with God. This is why he fled. There were plenty of sailors to help him. Life teaches us that when you have set yourself on a certain course, both circumstances and companions will combine to help you along that course. If you are determined to go against God you will find people are willing and able to help you go against God. There will be those who will be happy to take your money and help you on your way. There will be circumstances that combine to help you get on your way to go against God. And Jonah found that as soon as he determined to get away from God that a ship was waiting for him and sailors were happy to take his money. The other side of the coin is that, once you decide to go to God, circumstances and companions combine to help you go that way, too. Either way you go, you will find that circumstances will be provided as well as people to assist you. **So Jonah got his one way ticket.**
- B. Step of distress: Sooner or later disobedience leads to distress.
1. God lets us go only so far, but not off the cliff.
 2. Jonah might have been enjoying himself on the ship with the sea breeze of the Mediterranean Sea. He became drowsy and went down for a nap.
 3. Jonah 1:5, "**BUT**" Extremely important word. "But" Jonah arose to flee, "But" God hurled a great wind... It's like a gigantic chess game, every move Jonah made, God made one too, until God wins the game. Jonah as a child of God must accept His Lordship.
 4. **Miracle #1: Sending the great wind:** The first people to suffer were the sailors.
 - a) No one is an island unto himself.
 - b) Whether we are living the wrong or right way, others will benefit and/or suffer too, maybe even before we do.
 - c) In Jonah's case, the sailor's get the first taste of Jonah's disobedience. They would not of had this distress had it not been for Jonah's disobedience.
 - d) There is Jonah **sleeping** down in the boat.
 5. **Lesson:** If we are asleep because we trust in God, He will let us sleep on. But if we are asleep because of sin, God will sooner or later wake us up!
 - a) The sailors call on Jonah to wake up! "Get up, call on your God." (Jonah 1:6, NASB)
 - b) **Ephesians 5:14-18**, take notice of your condition, God is wanting to say something to you!
 - c) When Jonah woke up he did not pray, he couldn't pray. When you are running away from the presence of the Lord and you are in sin, you can't pray. You must first repent, recognize your sin, and then you can pray. This is something he

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would later do in the belly of the sea monster, this is something the prodigal son did once he came to his senses (Luke 15:18). The heathens were on their knees praying to heathen gods, and the only person on that ship that could not pray, could not get on his knees and pray, could not put his hands together and make supplications, was the man of God, the preacher of righteousness, the messenger of salvation-Jonah the dove of peace. Pagans challenged him to pray and he could not!

- C. **Step of disgrace:** Be sure you sin will find you out, publically as well.
1. The sailors began to ask all kinds of questions of Jonah, why is this man not praying, who is he, where is he from, etc. T
 2. he sailors knew only one way to find out who was at fault for the storm, casting lots. God has a way of finding out our sins. (Numbers 32:23; Luke 12:2; Proverbs 15:3; Romans 14:12)
 3. **Miracle #2:** Controlling the lots: The lots are cast and God controls them to fall on Jonah.
 - a) God had uncovered him in front of other people.
 - b) Jonah confessed, but his confession was vague and the sailors feared, but Jonah does not truly repent.
 - (1) He recites a creed but he does not live the word.
 - (2) The sailors struggle with the dilemma: What do we do?
 - (3) Jonah says to throw him overboard, the sailors don't want to do that because they know he will die, Jonah knows he will die.
 - (4) Was Jonah willing to just die? He wanted to die, as a matter of fact, he wished he had died when Nineveh repented.
 - (5) What should Jonah have really said?
 - (a) **Lesson:** Take me to Nineveh! so that I can get the job done. If Jonah had told the sailors, "The reason for this calamity is because I have disobeyed the Lord of the heavens, Creator of all, the One who controls the sea, He sent me to Nineveh and I said 'NO!' But If you take me to Nineveh so that I can do as He commanded then all of this calamity will not come upon you or me."
 - (b) But that is not what he said. **He was still looking for a way out of doing what God commanded him to do, even if it meant certain death!** But God is not going to let him out of this that easily.
- VI. Sailors: What did they see of God in their experience? What did the sailors find out about God? Suddenly their entire lives are changed because of their encounter with Jonah, the prodigal preacher.
- A. They were religious
1. Most people are religious, even he atheist ("I am an atheist, thank God!")
 2. They each had their own God.
 3. Most men will pray when up against a wall.
 4. Here is proof that religion does not save.
 5. Their prayers were not prayers of faith, but prayers of fear. They prayed to gods of their imaginations, but not to the true God.
- B. They were respectable
1. They were sure it was someone else who was at fault, that's why they wanted to cast lots.
 2. Most people today who are not saved, who are not Christians, are quick to shift blame onto everyone else but themselves.
 3. They were reasoning men.
 - a) They were willing to reason with Jonah to find out who he was, where he came from and what needed to be done to fix (CONVICTION) the problem.

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- b) But they also were resistant men who refused to do what they needed to do what needed to be done, they did not want to throw Jonah overboard. There was only one way out, and that was God's way. (Jonah 1:16)
- 4. They were repented men. (Jonah 1:16)
 - a) When they threw Jonah overboard they understood that Jonah was dead, thus it was a death.
 - b) The sea became calm, they believed in God and made vows, vows for the future.
 - c) They were convicted in the true God.

Conclusion:

- 1. In chapter one I see a little ship tossed about in the storms. Why? Because I am a disobedient child of God. And the load that I carry that is causing it all is my guilt. How can I ever get rid of that? How can I ever get that calm in the storm that I want. The peace that I long for? I can try to give my time, my money and energy to God. Jettisoning the cargo that I've been wanting to keep for myself, but that doesn't seem to help. I can try to row harder, try to be good, to be Christlike, but that doesn't get me nearer to the shore. God says he needs a death to cover the guilt. I don't have a Jonah to throw overboard and I can't throw myself overboard. What can I do. A greater than Jonah is here. Jesus has died. That's the message of the Cross. And the calm that comes with that message is the greatest calm that one can have. Knowing that Jesus was offered for my guilt - that God sends a great calm. When the sailors threw Jonah overboard there was a calm in the sea, and they vowed vows and promised that they would belong to the true God.
- 2. Come to Jesus, He is our only true sacrifice.