

God's Unrelenting Grace Series

He Wants You Back!

Feb. 11, 2018

This is the second message in our Series on the book of Jonah. I do want to remind you that the story of Jonah, which I believe is true, is much more than a story about a man and a whale. One of the reasons that God has placed this event in the canon of scriptures is for us to see that His is Unrelenting!

But not just towards Jonah, not just towards the people of Nineveh. He wants us to realize he has our number and he pursues us with an unrelenting grace. He is the good shepherd who leaves the 99 and comes after us. So let's dig in and dig deeper today into the text. Once again for the sake of time we look at portions of the chapters. Go with me to ...

Jonah 1:4-10 Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. **6** The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

7 Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

9 He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." **10** This terrified them, and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)

Jonah 2:9-3:2 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD." **10** And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: **2** "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

We know the book of Jonah is about God's Unrelenting Grace because despite what we have done, what we have said, or where we have been, God Wants Us Back!

God pursued Jonah, He wanted Jonah back so

- I. **He designs things to grab your attention (Jonah 1:4,6-7)** Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose, **6** The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

7 Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity."

There are 3 things our actions God takes to get Jonah's attention that he often does when we stray from him, To Get you back ...

- a. *He may send a storm* – God often uses storms of adversity to bring course corrections in our lives.

I want you to understand that God send the storm because he was mad at Jonah BUT because he loved Jonah and intended that the storm cause a course correction for him.

- God allow the storm of persecution in the early church to scatter the church to the gospel would spread (Acts 8:1-1)
- God sent a storm in the form of blindness to Saul's eyes as a result he became Paul and his eyes were opened to see the Lord

While storms are not always God's hand of correct, we should always ask if we don't know the reason, "God what are you trying to tell through this OR what can I learn from it!"

BUT Notice that Jonah was asking those questions, the storm did not getting his attention. Jonah is asleep in the ship – Jonah's physical posture reveals his spiritual condition. He is asleep spiritual – unaware that God is trying to get his attention through the storm. So God takes a second action to Get him back

- b. *He may send someone* (Vs. **6 The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up)**

Here is this idol worshipper who happens to be the captian of the ship and God uses him – he sends him to wake Jonah (Physically & Spiritual)

Understand the person God uses is inconsequential! God can and will use who ever and whatever is at his disposal to get you Back!

- Spoke through a donkey to Balaam to get his attention
- Spoke through the witch of Endor to get Pauls attention
- Spoke through a slave girl to Peter at the fire during Jesus trail to get his attention

- c. *He may expose the disobedience* (v.7 **They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.)**

- The Lord used Peter to expose Simon sinful motives in wanting the ability to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit

Scripture says sometime, somewhere, your sin, collectively and individually, will catch up with you.

Some time ago a magazine ran a series of illustrations of Numbers 32:23: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (KJV). In a department store in Rochester, New York, a man picked up an alarm clock, concealed it under his coat and headed for the nearest exit. He was caught when the alarm on the clock began ringing. Police in Palo Alto, California, seized a suspect as he admired a "wanted" poster of himself. A Canadian who had had a custom-built radio stolen from his automobile advertised in the local paper for a replacement. The first person to contact him was the thief. <http://bfmindia.blogspot.com/2015/04/your-sin-will-find-you-out-by-billy.html>

There are times where God needs to take drastic steps to get our attention. Almost like a slap in the face because without the proverbial storm we will continue in the wrong direction that will lead to destruction.

God wants you back sir, lady, teenager that he will go to whatever extremes necessary! Why because he loves you and he is not willing for you continue on the path of self-destruction.

Jonah reminds us that God's Grace is Unrelenting. The text tells us God wants you back so badly that...

- II. **He designs things to reignite your spirit (Jonah 1:9-10)** ⁹ He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." ¹⁰ This terrified them, and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)

After Jonah's sin was exposed we hear his confession – which is basically I'm running from God and since he is the God of heaven and earth, the maker of the sea and the land I just can't out run his presence!

I do believe this is a watershed (pun intended) moment for Jonah! Notice the acknowledgement of God Presence and ownership of his life. God want you back and so designs circumstances to remind as well as

- a. Reignite an acknowledgement of His presence

My father was raised in a Christian home. Attended church in his early formative years as a child. As a teenager he attended youth services and was involved in youth activities. WWII broke out on the scene and Dad enlisted in the army and was soon sent half way around the world. Perhaps because he was so far away from home, or peer pressure or whatever, somewhere along the way Dad thought that he could run from God and His presence. My father became deeply entrenched in alcohol and the so-called frontier sins. God and serving him was far from his mind. But one day he met my mother who had also enlisted as was with the Women Auxiliary Corp – about to get married the pending marriage became a catalyst to the acknowledgement of God's presence. My Dad

confessed to my mom. "I'm backslidden and running from God and one day I intend to serve him."

- He was running from God and those words were sweet to God's ears – God wanted him back –
- Like Jonah God had been pursue him across the continents, in and out of war zones, his ship being torpedoed, and decommissioned God was look for the acknowledgement of his presence but also ...

b. Reignite an acknowledgement of submission

- Jonah acknowledged Gods, but he still didn't was willing to submit to God's direction.
- Don't miss this "Obedience to the Lord's Command will be an end to the Lord's correction." Although Jonah acknowledged God he still was ready to submit to God.
- God wants us back BUT he will not change his commands to get us back.

Understand God will do whatever it takes to bring you back but the way back is

- III. **He requires genuine repentance** (Jonah 2:9-10; 3:1-2) **What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.** **3** Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: **2** "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

What is real or genuine repentance?

- It is not sorry I got caught – someone rightly said worldly sorrow focuses on us.
 - My guilt, my regret, my shame – even my own personal cost
 - My personal pain – when I'm sorry I got caught change usage doesn't happen – Jonah's case
- It is godly grief expresses itself externally
 - It more concerned about offending God
 - Concerned about making things right with God
 - Although repentance is an inward spiritual attitude it becomes as visible, tangible, and practical life change. It is only possible because of Christ Victory on the Cross-for us.
 - Jesus dying on the cross and God's honoring our repentance is proof God wants us back

Conclusion:

Prodigal God is setting on the porch watching what you will do today with this word

If there are 1000 steps between you and God, God will take the 999 and leave one for you