

## You Can Run, But You Can't Hide; Jonah 1:1-3

### I. God's People

- A. We run the race of Christianity with a different perspective
- B. Hebrews 12:1–2; 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- C. Sometimes things happen to us that change our perspective
- D. And we run in the opposite direction

### II. Running

- A. Jonah 1:1–3; 1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.



### B. Away from the presence of the Lord

1. A very interesting statement; Did Jonah really think he could escape the presence of God?
2. “It is a mistake to suppose that Jonah did not know that God was in Tarshish as well as in Jerusalem; for it is impossible to associate such an ignorance as that with a true prophet of God.” Coffman
3. Remember Adam and Eve?
4. If Jonah knew God was in Tarshish as well as Israel and Ninevah then why flee?
5. Jonah did not want to carry out God's divine plan thinking that He knew better
6. Jonah 4:1–2; 1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a

gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

7. The physical distance between Tarshish and Ninevah (in Jonah's mind) was enough to make God relieve him of his duties

C. Where is your Tarshish?

1. We are silly to think that we can run from the presence of God
2. Psalm 139:7–12; 7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
3. All too often we are running from the work He wants us to accomplish
4. "He did not expect to go where God was not, but where God would let him alone."  
Wolfendale
5. Our actions can tell God that we want to be left alone; fortunately for us, God doesn't always obey our wish
6. We can flee into our work ("I have to make ends meet, provide for my family")
7. We can flee into sin ("God surely won't follow me here") - The prodigal son
8. We can flee into the world ("I don't have to follow God")
9. 2 Timothy 4:10; For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

D. But no matter where we flee we will always "pay the fare"

E. You can run, but you can't hide

III. Calling For You

A. Jonah "paid the fare" in more than just money

B. Jonah 1:14–17; 14 Therefore they called out to the Lord, "O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you." 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. 17 And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

C. God continued to call for Jonah

1. The original call
2. The storm
3. The great fish

D. God continually calls for you

1. Acts 7:58; Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.
2. Paul heard Stephen's sermon, the wisdom that he had
3. Acts 6:10; But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.
4. Paul heard his final words, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

E. What is your great fish

1. This particular part of the story is fascinating
2. What fish was it? Was he alive the entire time? How did he breath? So many questions
3. There is no doubt that this part of the story far above anything natural

4. "A more pertinent question, it seems to this writer, is that of whether Jonah remained alive for that three days and three nights within the belly of the great fish, or if God raised him from the dead upon the occasion of the great fish's vomiting him out upon the dry land." Coffman
  5. Why did God even need the great fish?
  6. To bring Jonah to the point of obedience!
  7. Jonah 3:1–3; 1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth.
  8. I get the picture of a rebellious prophet headed to Ninevah, not because He wanted to, but because he had to
  9. I often pray, in the middle of hard times, "Lord please let me learn this lesson fast so this can be over"
- F. God brings us to the point of obedience by whatever means works
- G. You can run, but you can't hide!
- IV. Committed to God
- A. God is not satisfied with just your obedience, he wants your heart as well (to be like His)
  - B. Even though Jonah had obeyed, God wasn't through with him
  - C. Jonah 4:5–11; 5 Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." 10 And the Lord said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"
  - D. God is trying to teach Jonah to have compassion
    1. Pity - To share the suffering of others, to show kindness or forgiveness
    2. Jonah showed kindness and compassion for the plant, but not the people
    3. God wanted Jonah to look upon the people of Ninevah with compassion
    4. God's lesson for Jonah was a harsh one, provide for his comfort then take that provision away
  - E. What is your east wind
    1. God's lessons abound; He is constantly trying to teach us compassion
    2. Colossians 3:12–17; 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your

- hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
- F. God wants you to love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength
  - G. And that means loving others (compassion, kindness, forgiveness)
    - 1. God will provide an east wind for His children as long as they are not compassionate
    - 2. God wants more than just your obedience
    - 3. He wants your life!
    - 4. Colossians 3:1–3; 1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
  - H. You can run but you can't hide
- V. Your Life
- A. Don't flee to Tarshish - Give yourself over to God's plan
  - B. Don't wait for a great fish to be obedient to God - obediently work God's plan
  - C. Don't let it take an east wind for you to find compassion and forgiveness - hide your life with Christ in God