

Are you running from God?

'...Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish...' [Jonah 1:3](#)

Ninevah was about 550 miles east of Jonah. Tarshish was 2,500 miles west of him. Rather than go 550 miles in God's will, Jonah decided to go 2,500 miles out of it.

Ever do that? God says, 'Go here,' but you go there. The bad news is, you not only have to come back the 2,500 miles you went in the wrong direction, but the 550 miles God told you to go in the first place.

Furthermore, whenever you run from God, you get to pay the fare. '...He...found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare...' (Jonah1:3 NKJV). The good thing about going to Ninevah is, God will provide the fare. The bad thing about going to Tarshish is, you get to pick up the bill.

Many of us are paying a high price for our Tarshish trip, when, if we had done it God's way, He'd have picked up the bill.

And notice something else: when you disobey God you not only mess yourself up, but also those around you. Those poor sailors on the ship didn't ask for Jonah's mess, but they got it. Are you messing up the lives of others because of your rebellion? Think about it; if the wind, the sea and the whale had to obey God, what were Jonah's chances of escaping?

Jonah didn't rebound until he got swallowed, and some of us are not going to do the right thing until we are swallowed too; until God permits circumstances so adverse that running to Him, instead of from Him, is the only thing left.

Is God saying something to you today?

'...the word...came to Jonah the second time...' [Jonah 3:1](#)

Jonah did some serious praying in the whale's belly; he repented of his prejudice and learned to love people he despised. It was there he became willing to preach things people don't like to hear.

And you'll notice something else. God didn't intervene until he repented. Most of us want God to move before we've moved. No, Jonah acted, then God responded; He commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah up onto dry land, whereupon the runaway prophet asked for directions to Ninevah.

Sometimes because of our rebellious spirit we don't get it right until the next relationship. Sometimes because of our rebellious spirit we don't get it right until we're fifty. Sometimes because of our rebellious spirit we don't overcome our addiction until later, although we could have overcome it sooner.

Like Jonah we have to go to the bottom. But whatever it takes, God will do it. You can go to Ninevah yourself, or God can take you there. But it's easier to obey the first time.

Jonah's story proves that the Lord is a God of second chances. '...the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time...' (Jonah 3:1 NKJV). Good news:

Even though you've run from God, made a shipwreck of your life and feel like you're drowning, God will redeem and restore you if you'll turn to Him. He will give you a second chance in your marriage, your ministry or your vocation.

But there's one condition; God is not going to change His mind to accommodate what you want, so you need to change your mind and attitude and do what He says, okay?

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