



"Running from God, Caught by God"

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Jonah 1
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The book of Jonah is a literary masterpiece. Its story about Jonah's days in the belly of the "whale" is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. But too often we view it as a simple Sunday School lesson, missing the deeper message of Jonah—a message about sin and grace. If *sin* is our running from God, then *grace* is God's loving pursuit of us. God pursues us today just as he did Jonah.

1. God calls Jonah (1:1-2)

"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me" (v. 1-2).

- Nineveh was a _____ and an _____.

 God will often ask us to do things you _____.

2. Jonah runs from God (1:3)

"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" (v. 3).

 Jonah's running from God is a demonstration of Jonah's _____.

3. God chases Jonah (1:4-16)

"But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up." (v. 4)

- Jonah went DOWN: "But Jonah had gone **down** into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep" (v. 5).

 God's chasing after Jonah is a demonstration of God's _____.

4. God catches Jonah (1:17)

"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." (v. 17)

CONCLUSION

Jonah is not a story about a _____, but of a _____.

1. The book of Jonah shows us what a _____.

To see sin without grace is _____; to sin grace without sin is _____. To see both is _____.

2. The book of Jonah shows us what a _____.

God's Pursuit of Sinners

God's pursuit of sinners is evident in Jonah. First, God sends Jonah to preach to the Ninevites, the enemy of Israel. Then, when Jonah flees, God pursues Jonah, catches him, and returns him back to dry land. And like Jonah, all of us are running. We are either running away from God or toward God.

In his mind, Jonah had legitimate reasons for not wanting to preach to the Ninevites. But God gave him a second chance. Consider a time when you disobeyed God's direction and faced the consequences.

- What has God used in your past (or present) to get your attention?
- What has God asked you to do that you haven't done? (Is there any area of disobedience in your life?)