



Let's look at what Jonah put himself through to bring him to a place of needed redemption

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) The Runaway Prophet

Jonah was a prophet for God's service. God spoke to Jonah at one time and told him to go to Nineveh to let the people there know what He was going to do to them.

Jonah 1:1-3

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.” ³But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.

We often think of the so called “Spiritual Giants” of the Bible as infallible, yet we see here that a man that was a prophet of the Lord not only chooses to go directly against God's command, he is also foolish enough to think that he could get away from God by going somewhere else. “boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.” (vs 3)

All too often we think that we can do the same thing. We feel that if we just don't look up, keeping our head down and go our way, God can't see what we are doing or thinking. How foolish. Proverbs 15:3 tells us this, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.”

In my life from the time I invited Jesus into my heart/life as a boy until my bear attack I didn't run away from Him on purpose, I just didn't have anything to do with Him. My life was about me and my needs. Since the bear attack and the turnaround of my heart I can confess that there are times that the Holy Spirit has sent me to do a job and I have failed, we all have.

Just a few weeks ago I saw a police officer sitting in his car and felt the Holy Spirit direct me to go to him and pray for him. I followed through, partially. Went up and thanked him for his service for my family and made a little small talk and then I walked away with praying. I used the reasoning that I didn't want to bother him, but I did exactly what Jonah had done. There aren't any of us that aren't a Jonah now and then.

2) Out at Sea

Jonah leaves and goes to Joppa, but instead of getting a boat to Nineveh he boards one going to Tarshish. When they got out to sea Jonah went below and went to sleep. Unknown to Jonah a horrendous storm blew up and the sailors were fearful for their lives. The boat was about to break apart and the sailors cried out to each of their gods. When nothing worked the captain goes below deck to wake up Jonah.

Jonah was still sleeping and the captain woke him and brought him up on deck. The sailors made a plan to cast lots to see who the responsibility fell on for the storm. The lot fell on Jonah and when the sailors found out who was and what he was doing they became extremely frightened.

They asked Jonah what they should do with him and when he told them to throw him overboard. They argued but the storm continued to rage stronger and stronger until they picked him up and tossed in into the waves.

God had already had a plan before Jonah was thrown overboard. The fish was waiting for Jonah and as soon as he went into the water he was swallowed by the great fish. Even though Jonah was being disciplined for running away from God, God had prepared a plan long before to restore Jonah.

There are times when you and I mess up and make bad choices and decisions, yet God has a plan to restore us long before we went wrong. He is a loving and gracious God and we are never out of His reach.

3) Jonah's prayer

Before he even went overboard Jonah knew that he was found out. Like with overcoming any sinful issue in our life, the first step is acknowledging that you have done wrong. I am sure it wasn't long after being swallowed up Johan began to turn back to God. However, it was three days before Jonah called out to God in repentance. When Jonah finally broke and admitted his fault in his prayer (Jonah 2), God caused the great fish to vomit him up onto the shore.

4) Nineveh repents

After Jonah was safe on shore God came to him again, telling him to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah went and did as God had commanded. When Jonah had gone to Nineveh and preached repentance the people turned from their wicked and sinful ways and turned to the Lord.

When Jonah was spit out of the fish and landed on dry land again God redeemed him for His service. When I left the hospital in Canada I traveled back to Houston. I had no intentions of telling my story for God's glory, but God had other plans for me. God and my wife worked together to get me in front of



one group after another to share the miraculous story of my redemption at the paws and teeth of a great bear.

5) Jonah rebels again

Jonah walked through the streets of Nineveh preaching the warning that God had sent. Amazingly, all of the people, from the king down to the lowest of citizens repented and turned from their sin and to worshipping the one true God.

We would think that this would have given Jonah a great sense of accomplishment. Instead, Jonah complained to God that his trip and time was a waste because God was going to do what He said He was going to do. Jonah became so angry that he told God that He wished he was dead.

The book of Jonah ends abruptly. However there is great meaning and symbolism in the lessons from this book. Even Jesus used the story of Jonah to explain His own death and resurrection.

Matthew 12:39-40

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign; and there shall be no sign be given, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

As we read the story of Jonah we see the obvious plan of God is Jonah's redemption. We see and live out the story of God's beautiful redemption story of our lives every day. We live out many sinful actions and yet God sees something in us that we don't even see in ourselves. God sees something that He can use... and He does. We take no pride in our past, but we should take pride in what God has done and continues to do in our lives moving forward.