

The Fathers Heart: Discipline and Hardship

February 27, 2022

A. Who was Jonah?

- *Jonah 1:1-2... PREDICTABLE!*
- *“The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” (Jonah 1:1-2)*
 - The book of Jonah is situated near the end of the Old Testament, in a grouping of books referred to as the “*minor prophets*”.
- This first verse fits the typical mold for how these minor prophet books would begin... they would usually state who the prophet was (i.e. Messenger, God’s mouthpiece), often also stating their lineage, as well as who they were delivering their message to.
 - What do we know about Jonah? He was mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, in **2 Kings 14** to be specific. We won’t have time to look at that today, but Jonah was a known prophet in **Northern Israel**.
 - So far, Jonah is fitting in quite naturally. But as we are about to see, this is not a typical prophetic book. In fact, the book only contains a one line of prophecy. Imagine that!
 - Ready for the twist?

B. Jonah is a REBEL... just like ME (& you)

- *Jonah 1:3... the UNEXPECTED!*
- *The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord. (Jonah 1:1-3)*
- I know that we have all likely read this book before, and so this sudden twist can lose its effect on us. But try to grasp how unexpected this turn of events is...
 - *Try to imagine that this is your first time reading this book, okay?*
 - *We should be scratching our heads here... why would the prophet of God be trying to flee from God?*
- **Princess Bride Illustration...**
- In the opening “act” of this fascinating little book, Jonah “the Prophet” turns out to be Jonah the **REBEL**. Instead of going where the Lord sends him, he goes the **opposite** direction! Like as far in the opposite direction as possible, by the way.
 - **Show Map Of Tarshish VS. Nineveh** This is calculated. Tarshish was quite literally the farthest away from Nineveh as possible.
- **TIMEOUT**: now before we judge Jonah... we know the first and obvious take away from this book, right? We are “rebels” too.
 - To varying degrees, we have all run from God. And as Pastor Stefan has said, our job is not to determine the motives of others (*because we are so often wrong anyways*). But with Jonah we don’t have to guess. **He tells us exactly why he ran in chapter 4.**

- **Scared?** Perhaps that was also part of it, and I certainly wouldn't blame him. But that was not the primary reason.
 - I'll tell you why Jonah didn't want to follow God on this mission... it's simple actually: Jonah's plan and God's plan didn't align. Jonah didn't agree with the direction God was taking his life. **We will see more of this later on in the book.**
- We have all had this, right? A time when we choose to go our own way instead of God's. Reasons are commonly... **1) Sin** (Isaiah 53:6), **2) Fear** (Proverbs 29:25), **3) Conflicting Desires**
 - **So what happens next?**

C. The Fathers Heart *in Discipline*

- Jonah 1:4... DISCIPLINE!
- *"Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up." (Jonah 1:4)*
 - A great storm appears suddenly, making Jonah's get away very difficult. Futile, in fact.
 - **Have you ever encountered a sudden storm like this?** Have you ever noticed that God will often send "storms" in life at the strangest times... "storms" come to test us, and to challenge us to consider the path we are on.
- Its called **discipline**, and the Bible tells us that God is a Good Father that disciplines his Children, for their own good! (**set up passage by explaining context: RACE Hebrews 12:1-3**)
 - *"In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this **word of encouragement** that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, **because the Lord disciplines the one, he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.**" (Hebrews 12:4-6)*
 - **Haggai 1:7-11** (if it feels right...)
- God is **LOVED** Jonah enough to send this storm, and God loves you (and me) enough to send "storms" in our lives too.
- Discipleship is a TWO-WAY street though... **discipline (storms) is on God's yard, but how we choose to respond is on US!** And how we respond MATTERS!

D. Our Response Matters!

- Jonah 1:5... JONAH'S RESPONSE!
- *"All the sailors were afraid, **and each cried out to his own god.** And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone **below deck**, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep." (Jonah 1:5)*
- Now here is where the message gets really important, church. How we respond to discipline, or any hardship for that matter, is crucial.
 - I want you to notice – **what are the sailors doing?**
 - They are CRYING OUT. To whom? Not to the true God... not to Yahweh, creator of all things. But they are crying out.
 - And where is Jonah? He is downstairs... asleep. Silent. Not crying out.

- Church, I wonder... are we known for crying out to God? Are you, Christian man or woman, know for crying out to God in a storm?
 - I wonder sometimes what I will be known for at the end of my life. Will I be known as someone who sought the Lord, and responded well?
 - *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (2 Chron 7:14)*
- **Two Other Boat Stories For Comparison:**
 1. **Hudson Taylor aboard the Dumfries**
 - a. Hudson Taylor felt God calling him to China, and as a young man in his early 20’s, he obeyed the call and set out from Liverpool England on the boat called Dumfries to sail to China!
 - b. While they were still in the Irish sea, only having just left the coast, the boat came into a fierce storm that lasted for days. The waves were forcing the vessel closer and closer to the jagged rocks on the coast, and many aboard feared for the worst.
 - c. What did Hudson do? He prayed! He recalls **Psalm 50:15** coming to mind, which says *“...and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”* He cried out to God. Who here has ever gotten a Word from God in a storm? AMAZING!
 - d. **But Hudson wasn’t running from God, he was running WITH God towards his calling.**
 - e. **It is hard to cry out to God when you know you’re on the wrong boat, isn’t it?**
 - f. When you are rebelling, crying out can be one of the hardest things to do... because it takes admitting your wrong.
 2. **Jesus and the Disciples, Luke 8:22-25**
 - a. *“One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.” (Luke 8:22-25)*
 - b. We see a lot of similarities between this story and Jonah, don’t we? Both stories include a boat, a storm, crying out, someone sleeping, and even the waters calming.
 - c. But again, Jesus is on the right boat. He is God and was in full submission to his Father’s will. Jonah was not.
 - d. Both Jesus and Jonah were sleeping, though! That is true! But here is the difference I see... Jesus was sleeping on the boat, which to me symbolizes **PEACEFUL REST** while following God. Even in a storm Jesus was able to rest and trust... to recharge... **Have you ever met someone that has peace in a storm?** Despite the wind and the waves, they are able to rest in God’s arms and know he is in control? That seems to be Jesus in this passage. The disciples are freaking out, Jesus is cool as can be, and calms the storm.

- e. *Jonah on the other hand... he is running from God. The wind and the waves start to pick up (and he knows why even...), and what does he do? He doubles down on his resolve to run... and heads downstairs for a nap. There is a word for this kind of rest in modern English... **NETFLIX** (or fill in your distraction of choice) ...*
 - i. *Jonah's "rest" wasn't rooted in trust and peace... he was turning a blind eye and ignoring the workings of God all around him.*
 - ii. **Church, has this been us at times?**

E. Conclusion: What should we do?

- Well... this sermon is coming to a close. Let's go back to our passage one more time. The sailors ask a really good question. **"What should we do?"** What should **Jonah** do?
- *"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. So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" He answered, "I am a Hebrew and **I worship the Lord**, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 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.) The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "**What should we do** to you to make the sea calm down for us?" (Jonah 1:7-11)*
 - Isn't this interesting... Jonah is honest with the men about **who he is** and **who he calls Lord**... (and that he "worships" Yahweh 😊) but he isn't ready to be honest with himself or with his God.
 - **What should Jonah do?** The same thing all of us should do... but fail too far too often.
 - **REPENT!** But instead he says, *"Pick me up and through me into the sea..."* (Jonah 1:12)
 - **Jonah chooses to die on this hill.**
- Its interesting, you know... I've always seen Jonah as heroic in this moment. And I think that is the vibe often in the kids books. But the more I think about it the more I wonder, why wouldn't Jonah just repent instead? At least try that first... you know?
 - Maybe, *and I speculate*, it was that Jonah would rather have died at this point than humble himself before God.
 - And if you read to the end of this story, that idea is not too wild.
 - Maybe it was compassion for the sailors, or perhaps shame (thinking he had gone too far for God to forgive him...). But I do wish Jonah would have turned to God in repentance at this point. Don't you?
- Then it says this, *"Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him."* (Jonah 1:13-16)

Here is the big (& final) point, Church...

- **No one else can repent for you.** No one else can turn to God for you. No one else can choose your response in a storm.
 - **Will you repent, or keep running?**
 - **God disciplines us for our GOOD, church. Because he loves us with a Fathers Heart.**
- Next week we are going to talk a little bit more about responding to discipline, as well as hardship (not necessarily related to your sin) in general... But for now...

Share my testimony briefly...