

RUNNING FROM GOD INTO GOD – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Friends, I greet you again, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I sincerely want to thank you for permitting me come into your home week-after-week; and I pray that the Lord will bless you richly.

Today, I want to speak on: Running from God into God.

Running from God into God

And our text is taken from the Book of Jonah, a familiar story. Jonah 1 – we need to read from verses 1 to 17, at least; but that's long for our radio time. So I will read just a few verses.

Jonah 1:1-4, 10-17

¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” ³But Jonah arose 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 from the presence of the LORD. ⁴But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

¹⁰Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “Why have you done this?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. ¹¹Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

¹²And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest *is* because of me.”

¹³ Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, “We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You.” ¹⁵ So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

¹⁷ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

PRAYER:

Father, we pray that You would speak to us from Your Word now. My friends in radioland are reading; You bless them O God in their reading... in Jesus’ Name. Amen!

The background of the story we have read is: Nineveh, located on the Eastern Part of River Tigris, in Modern Day Iraq, was the capital of Assyria; and Assyria was an arrogant impudent and brutal nation: a menace to many nations, including Jonah’s people Israel. Before the Assyrians, with their capital in Nineveh, reached divine limit for sin...you’re wondering what does it mean by divine legal limit for sin – that is the point at which God would cut off your sinning and come in with His discipline. If you want to examples of legal limit of sin you read Genesis 15:16, Matthew 23:32, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. Before Nineveh could reach that legal limit for sin, God of mercy wanted to give them one more chance. For this reason He sent His servant Jonah to preach to them, and to preach to them an apocalyptic message – but good news, nevertheless, for Jonah was to warn them, to escape from god’s judgment. For those who do not consider Jonah’s mission as good news mission, consider this observation from a dear servant of God,

“Part of speaking the truth in love [We find it in Ephesians 4: 15] is warning sinners when they sin. According to D.A Carson, Jesus spoke about hell twice as often as He spoke about heaven. How many of us follow His examples today? The next time you have an opportunity to share the Gospel with a lost person ask yourself this question, if I have cancer, and you are an oncologist (that’s cancer specialist or doctor), what is the most loving thing you can do for me?

We don’t hear preachers preach of God’s judgment anymore of hell. We consider that if we say those things, if we tell them, it’s not good news. What is good news from an oncologist to somebody who has cancer? Is it to say, O no problem! No problem! You’re prospering – God will prosper you. God will do you good. No: you tell the person how to escape from the death that cancer brings.

Let me point out just two things from Jonah’s story and with one or two applications. The first is that Jonah ran from God; and the second is that Jonah ran into God. In verses 1-3 of Jonah 1, Jonah ran from God. The command of God to Jonah was clear. There was no ambiguity at all. In fact, it was the clarity of the command that informed Jonah’s action, that’s is, running from God.

Why did Jonah run from God? The Assyrians were Jonah’s enemies, as well as enemies of many other nations. And Jonah wanted to see the worldly vengeful principle of back-to-sender fulfilled in their lives – in the lives of the Assyrians. Jonah wanted to make sure that God punished them. By his own admission, in Jonah 3:10 through 4:2, Jonah wanted God to judge Nineveh. Jonah went to the port city of Joppa, took a boat and ran from God to Tarshish. He thought...and this place He was running to: Tarshish, was about 2500 miles from his hometown. However Nineveh was only about 500 miles from Jonah’s home. Jonah was trying to kill two birds with one stone, was trying to put as much distance between himself and God, and as much distance between himself and the Assyrians at the same time. Tarshish, which is near to Gibraltar in Southern Spain, where Jonah was running to was in the opposite direction and that was the farthest he could go. Jonah wanted to go as far away from God and from Nineveh as possible. But Jonah, by running from God, seemed to have forgotten what he learned about the God of Israel who said:

²³ *"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?"
²⁴ Can anyone hide himself in secret places,
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.*

"That's in Jeremiah 23:23-24

By way of application, friend, how many times have you tried to run away from God, I mean those times you did the opposite of what God wanted you to do, with this confidence that you are out of God's reach and sight, either because it was dark or you were behind closed doors? How many times have you tried to run from God? How many times have you entertained sinful and wicked thoughts in your hearts with this assurance that no body, including God would see you or know. It is true that there is no place more secret than your heart yet God knows what is in your heart.

In 1 Samuel 16:7, when God sent Samuel to anoint the King for Him at the house of Jesse, Samuel felt that the kingly-looking Eliab the son of Jesse was the one, and God said to him,

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees¹ for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

God knows your heart, friend. This simple chorus is a good reminder – old chorus, it says:

*You cannot hide it from God.
You cannot hide it from God
You may cover all your sins
that no body may know,
but you cannot hide it from God.*

Friends, my time is up. We'll come back next time to conclude this message .

But for now, I want to appeal to you not to run from God, but give your life to Him by receiving Jesus Christ into your heart. Simply say, O God, I'm a sinner. Your Word says so – my conscience confirms it; forgive me. Lord Jesus, come into my heart and save me.

PRAYER:

Father, as many as are praying this prayer, I know You will hear them, You will answer them, and You will save them, and You will break the power of sin in their lives. And remember Your Words that You forgive all our sins and you heal all our diseases, and you heal them too...in Jesus Name. Amen!