

RUNNING FROM GOD INTO GOD – PART TWO

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.

I greet you again, friends, as we return to the message we started with last time; and we want to conclude today. If you recall, the title of that message was and still is, Running from God into God. *Running from God into God*. And the test is from Jonah 1, reading at verse 1. I will read just a few verses, because the text is a bit long.

Jonah 1:1-4; 14-17

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.

¹⁴Therefore 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.” ¹⁵So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

¹⁷Now 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:

Faithful Father, let the entrance of Your Word give light and life to my friends in radioland, this hour...in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Last time, I gave you the background of the story: it's about Nineveh, the Capital of Assyria. Nineveh is located East of Tigris River, in Modern Iraq. The Assyrians were wicked people: brutal, impudent – a menace to so many nations, including Israel. Their wickedness had come up to God, and He was going to give them one more chance. And before He would destroy them, He sent Jonah to warn them. And Jonah started to run from God.

We saw last time that Jonah ran from God, from Jonah 1:1-3 – so he thought. And why was he running from God? Why did he refuse to go to Nineveh to warn them? It was because Jonah wanted God to punish them. That's what Jonah said, in Jonah 3:10 to chapter 4:2. Jonah wanted them to suffer in the hands of God. He wanted back-to-sender: just as some people say in Nigeria. However, Nineveh was a shorter distance – far shorter distance from Jonah's home: about 500 miles; but Tarshish where he was running to, was about 2500 miles. But Jonah had forgotten what he was taught growing up as an Israelite, that God was so big, so strong, that God fills heaven and earth, that God is omnipresent and omniscient. Jonah forgot all that.

Then last time, friend, I asked by way of application, how many times you've tried to run from God – running from Him in the sense of doing the opposite of what He wants You to do – the right thing? How many times have you entertained wicked thoughts, unclean thoughts in your hearts, with the assurance that no body, even God, would see you?

Jonah ran from God, but we want to conclude with a second part, and that is, Jonah ran into God. When Jonah thought he was running from God, he did not know that he was running into God. And you will find that in Jonah 1:14-17. We read part of that already. Running from God is a futile exercise in the light of what we read in Psalm 139:7-12

Psalm 139:7-12

*Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

Notice the long hand of God in the sequence of events from the time Jonah started running from Him until he ran into God. The Long hand of God is seen in the sequence of events:

- i. God sent a violent storm at sea. That's in verse 4.
- ii. The storm revealed the identity of Jonah who was fast asleep at the lowest part of the ship, if you read from verses 5-9.
- iii. Jonah opted to die than obey God, because he told the sailors, Pick me up and throw me into the sea. What was he expecting would happen? He would drown. Rather than do what God said to do, Jonah preferred to die. Friend, are you like that? You are saying to yourself in your heart it's over my dead body that I would do what God commands. And you would die if care is not taken.
- iv. Jonah ended up in the hand of God.

Verse 17

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.

You can say Jonah was in the hand of God three days and three nights. For those who have a hard time believing this “big fish” story, Jesus Himself confirms its authenticity in Matthew 12:40

Matthew 12:40

⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus confirms here that this was a true story – it happened. The futility of running from God lies in the fact that the runner ends up running into God. Let me say that again: The futility of running from God lies in this fact that the runner ends up running into God. And everyone who runs into God does so in one of two ways:

- You could run into the mercy of God,
- Or you could run into the judgment of God.

Fortunately for Jonah, he ran into the mercy of God. And that was what saved him from death, even though he saw death as a preferable alternative. But ironically, it was this same mercy of God that Jonah worked so hard to deny the Ninevehites. We read in Jonah 3:10 through chapter 4:4

¹⁰ Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ² So he prayed to the LORD, and said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!”

⁴ Then the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

Jonah said, I would rather die than see You spare these wicked Assyria.

Jonah ran into God but into the mercy of God. But on the other hand, friend, you may run into God by way of His judgment, as was the case with the rich man in Luke 16 – the story of the Rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16.

Luke 16:22-24

²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

This man now realizes the need for prayer, but he was praying too late. The sooner you realize that you can never run away from God, friends, without running into Him, the better for us; even if you end up running into God's mercy – it is not advisable to entertain the idea of running from Him at all; for God is not a man with limitations. Let us never forget that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31.

Friends, this is good news. It is good news to warn you to run, not from God, but to run to him now in repentance from your sins and invite Jesus Christ into your life, for God sent Him into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through Him, you, myself and the world will be saved – those who believe. Won't you surrender to Him now, friend? Say to Him, Lord Jesus, I am a sinner, and I believe you died for me; come into my life and take control.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the time You have given us to search the scriptures. Into Your hands I commit all my friends in radioland, especially those You've spoken to today, who are returning to you, surrendering to Christ. Receive them, bless them abundantly, with Your precious eternal life. And also, Lord, I pray that every work of Satan in them and around them would be destroyed; for this reason the Son of

God was manifested that He may destroy the works of the devil. Do so, Father, for these ones You love, in radioland, in Jesus Name. Amen!