

There Is a Little Bit of Jonah in All of Us

Oh I don't want to accuse you of this, but I will admit that I struggle with the whole issue.

We all know the story of Jonah and the whale. We learned it as kids in Sunday school. But have we realized what his problem was?

You will remember that he was a prophet of God. You will also recall that God wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to these people.

So God comes to His prophet and tells him to go down to Nineveh and preach repentance to these folks. Nineveh must hear the "word of the Lord."

Here-in lies the rub. Jonah did not want to go. He did not want to preach to these folks. They were bad folks and Jonah wanted no part of this program. Why? We will discuss this later, but let's continue.

Rather than obey what God had told him, he decided rather to go instead to a place called Tarshish. We don't always do what we are told either, do we?

Anyway, he sets sail for Tarshish. Verse 2 of chapter 1 tells us that Jonah went DOWN to Joppa, then DOWN into the boat all to flee the presence of the Lord. Mistake beloved. Other men of God have also gone DOWN from where they were – example to Egypt from Canaan etc. only to discover their mistake through tribulation.

So God sends a mighty wind on the sea. Jonah is now in the bottom of the boat sleeping when this mighty wind comes up. This wind and waves scared these mariners half to death and then they started doing what a lot of folks do. They started to lighten the load they were carrying. I.e. Things are a mess in my life, I need to start this and stop that to correct the problem

It is interesting to me that the mariners knew that Jonah was the reason for the tribulation they were experiencing. Though they knew, they cast lots to see who it would fall upon just to be sure. Without a doubt, the lot fell on Jonah. "You are the reason we are going through this trial, what have you done?"

Further, what do we need to do to you or for you to get the sea to calm?

Jonah responded to their request with "well, just throw me overboard and the sea will become calm for you."

Interesting side note here beloved, the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to show them He was really the Son of God, and Jesus told them they would receive no more of a sign except that Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of a great fish, and He Himself must be in the heart of the Earth for three days and 3 nights.

Ever ask yourself, well once discovered to be the problem, why didn't Jonah just jump overboard himself? The answer is quite simple beloved, Jonah is a type of Jesus here,

and the death of the Lord Jesus had to be the fault of someone else. In Jonah's case his death had to be the fault of the mariners.

So, the mariners did as Jonah requested and "threw him overboard."

Immediately, the sea calmed and Jonah was swallowed by the giant fish.

Inside the fish, Jonah cried out to the Lord and guess what? God answered him.

Next thing Jonah knew, the fish vomited him onto dry land and guess what happened next? God said, now go to Nineveh and preach to these folks like I told you in the first place.

Jonah did then what he was commanded by God to do.

And his greatest fears came to pass.

They heard his preaching and they repented. God saw their works and ways after Jonah preached and God "relented" from the disaster that He said He would bring upon them and He did not do it.

Now here-in is the message for us today.

Their repentance displeased Jonah exceedingly and made him angry.

Notice the discourse between God and Jonah in chapter 4 vs 2 and following: "Ah Lord, was this not as I said when I was still in my country. Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish: **"for I know you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, one who relents from doing harm"**

"therefore now O' Lord, take my life from me for it is better for me to die than live."

God asked Jonah – "is it right for you to be angry"?

God then gives Jonah another example by a miracle for a plant for Jonah to hide under for shade against his misery.

In the morning, God creates a worm to eat the plant and expose Jonah to the heat of the day. This too did not set well with Jonah and again he wished he could die.

I love the discourse between God and His prophet. Look at verse 9 of chapter 4. "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant"? Jonah replied "It is right for me to be angry even to death."

"But the Lord said. You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, or made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night and (vs 11) should I not pity Nineveh that great city in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left".

Now I said all of this as a result of my conversation with Sally at lunch yesterday concerning our current political situation.

I literally hate what some of these folks stand for, for their selfishness and their positions and their conniving money grabbing ways. I hate the “insider trading where they know what is coming, and buy and sell stocks accordingly” I hate what they are doing to our great country and to be very honest with you, I want them to somehow suffer for their behavior. I want there to be “comeuppance” and a full cup pf wrath to come to them.

I don't want Jesus to preach to them, they might repent and not be held responsible for the pain they have created. I too would rather take a boat to Tarshish.

However – at the end of the day -

I repent of my attitude Father, and acknowledge with the Apostle that it is “your goodness that brought me to repentance.” And, I might add, these folks cannot discern between their right hand and their left either.

As I confess my sin, even so come quickly Lord.