



Sunday, July 12, 2020
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Jonah 1:1-17

The LORD is merciful to Jonah, but not the way we might think. When Jonah ran away to go to Tarshish, rather than to Nineveh like the LORD commanded him, the LORD could have punished him right on the spot. His disobedience as a prophet of God merited death. Or, the LORD could have shown mercy in a completely different manner, by transporting Jonah in the Spirit to Nineveh as He did with Philip after he met with the Ethiopian eunuch so many years later (Acts 8:39-40).

Instead, the LORD sent a storm. This was a fierce storm that could have cost him his life and the lives of the sailors who were ignorant of Jonah's disobedience. But the LORD, in His sovereign grace, kept the boat from sinking, and instead allowed His glory to be displayed through Jonah's confession, then through the calming of the storm once Jonah was cast overboard. Thus, the storm itself, the apparent conversion of the sailors, and the presence of the fish, all serve as signs to Jonah to point him to the mercy of the LORD and to show him that salvation truly does belong to Him alone (Jonah 2:9).

Context

This first chapter is the part of Jonah that everyone knows from childhood—that Jonah disobeyed God, that God sent a storm, that once Jonah was thrown overboard the storm ceased, and that the LORD prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. What often gets missed, however, is the sailors in the background. Not only are they more devoted to their gods than Jonah was to his, but they end up fearing the LORD and making vows and sacrifices to Him. This ironic twist is something that Jonah employs throughout the book—all the way through the ironic relationship with the plant in chapter 4. This type of irony is echoed throughout biblical narratives, especially in the Gospels.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Jonah 1:1-17

“God Pursues His Own”

Jonah 1

God formed a violent storm to stop him.

- Natural means
- Creator – persistent

God used pagan sailors to shame him.

- Unusual means
- Compassionate to both

God sent a great fish to save him.

- Miraculous means
- Creator...almighty!

Discuss

- 1) What does the LORD's response to Jonah's disobedience teach us about how He shepherds His people?
- 2) What causes us to be spiritually lethargic or spiritually asleep at times?
- 3) Has the Lord ever brought about difficult circumstances in your life to get your attention? What was that like? And what truths from Scripture do you think He wanted you to learn?
- 4) Can you think of a time when non-Christians acted more righteously or compassionately than Christians? How did you respond to that?
- 5) Read Numbers 32:23. How does this apply to Jonah's situation? How might it apply to ours?