

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Jonah 1:17-2:10**.
- B. There are many jokes and fables surrounding fish stories.
- C. God tells His own fish story, but this one is true. It is the story of Jonah.
- D. There are many things we can learn and apply to our lives from this autobiographical story. We will look at two lessons from each chapter; one lesson for Jonah, and one for the Gentiles.

I. (Chapter 1): JONAH RUNS AWAY FROM GOD.

- A. The Gentiles learned: it is foolish to resist the will of God.
Jonah learned: there is no escaping from God (2:2; Psa. 139:7-9).
(Jon 2:2) ...and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; Thou didst hear my voice."
(Psa 139:7-9) Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? **8** If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. **9** If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,
- B. Jonah learned that no divine task could be taken lightly (2:8-9). We should never try to classify the commands of God as to those that are important and those what are not.
"Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, **9** But I will sacrifice to Thee With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."
- C. Jonah, has shown us that God has given us all things according to His will, in X (Mt. 12:39-41). Not to believe this story is to make X a liar!
But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; **40** for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. **41** The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."
- D. The Gentiles witnessed two miracles that helped them to believe in God:
 1. The great storm (1:4-5, 14). It caused the unbelievers to believe in God.
And the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. **5** Then the sailors became afraid, and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep. **14** Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for Thou, O LORD, hast done as Thou hast pleased."
 2. The calm after the storm (1:15-16). It caused the unbelievers to worship God.
So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. **16** Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.
- E. Moral of the story: it is foolish to resist the will of God. His will, will be done!

II. (Chapter 2): JONAH RUNS TOWARD GOD.

- A. The Gentiles learned: miracles have been used to show God's power.
Jonah learned: repentance--at his foolish and sinful running from God.
- B. Jonah comes to his senses and decides to do God's will (2:4). Jonah realizes that God is an ever-present part of his life and he needs to learn to do His will. That's a lesson for us too!
- C. God used several miracles to show His care and guidance to Jonah:
 1. The great fish (1:17; 2:1). It caused Jonah to lament over his sin.
And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights. **2:1** Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,...
 2. The gourd plant (4:6). A physical blessing for comfort to the faithful.
So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him

from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.

3. The worm that ate the plant (4:7). It helped Jonah to realize that spiritual blessings are better than physical ones.

But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered.

- D. Don't wait for a miracle or a tragedy to see your need to return to God. God wants to be part of your life in a positive way.

III. (Chapter 3): JONAH RUNS WITH GOD.

- A. The Gentiles learned: God seeks the salvation of all people.
Jonah learned: Of the great power in doing/preaching God's word.
- B. What a great preacher Jonah was! Why in a short time, he had the entire city in sack cloth and ashes, from the king to the servant, showing the repentance of their sinful ways.
- C. How powerful we are when we do God's will (Eph. 3:20,21)!
Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21** to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
- D. The gospel is for every creature (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19; Rom 1:16).
- E. In Jonah's day, the Israelites had nothing to do with the Gentiles. This is one of the reasons that Jonah was reluctant to go to Nineveh. But this story shows that God is concerned about the welfare of all people.
- F. All people, regardless of race, color, religion, economic or social status have a soul which will be either eternally lost or saved.
- G. God's kingdom is made up to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9).
And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

IV. (Ch. 4): JONAH RUNS AHEAD OF GOD.

- A. The Gentiles learned: true repentance can avert a catastrophe.
Jonah learned: the value of spiritual blessings over physical ones to all people.
- B. The people of Nineveh needed great guidance in many things. They were wicked (1:2) and they were ignorant (4:11).
- C. But the people repented, so God did not destroy the city (see 3:5-10).
- D. People will still respond to the gospel today (Lk. 8:11; Isa. 55:11; Ac. 8:12).
(Lk 8:11) "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God."
(Isa 55:11) So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
(Ac 8:12) But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.
- E. Repentance from evil deeds always brings great blessings. This is the covenant of blessing and cursing as found in Deut. 28.
- F. Now Jonah needs to repent! He is a nationalistic bigot who would rather see the Ninevites destroyed that saved. He gets more upset over a gourd plant than 100,000 people who don't know their right hand from their left.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We have learned some things about Jonah, and learned some things about the people he dealt with:
 1. About Jonah:
 - a. He ran away from God (there is no escaping from God).
 - b. He ran toward God (repentance at his foolish and sinful running from God).
 - c. He ran with God (the great power in doing/preaching God's word).
 - d. He ran ahead of God (the value of spiritual blessings over physical ones).
 2. About the Gentile peoples:

- a. They found it foolish to resist the will of God.
 - b. They responded to God's miraculous power.
 - c. They knew that God loves and seeks salvation for all people.
 - d. They learned that true repentance can avert a catastrophe.
- B. Don't be so foolish as to resist the will of God. Repent and avert an eternal tragedy in your life!
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.