

July 07, 2019

(Bigger Series)

“The One That Tried to Get Away” Jonah 1:1-16

Our summer series, “Bigger” is the teaching of the historical record of God’s prophet, Jonah. It’s no “fish tale” but a relevant, missional story that God’s purposes, love, and mercy are so much **bigger!** The chronicling of Jonah’s experience reminded Israel (and each of us), we are His missionaries who are to tell the world that God cares deeply for all people – even those who are indifferent to us.

**When God sends Jonah to people who are not his people, Jonah tried to get away from God.** Jonah tried to run from God to avoid the mission God gave him, which was to warn the dreaded, enemy nation of Assyria, God’s judgment is coming if they did not repent from their wicked, pagan ways. The story has three movements:

**1. Jonah clearly hears God’s call. (vv.1-2)**

Jonah, was an experienced prophet during the reign of an evil Israelite King, Jereboam II. He obediently prophesied God’s message of repentance to Israel, but hated the powerful and wicked Assyrians. He clearly heard God say, “Get up!” and “Cry out!” my message to Nineveh that I am about to deal with them severely if they do not change their ways.

**2. Jonah runs as far as he possibly can. (vv.3)**

When Jonah hears God’s call to Ninevah, he was disobedient. Jonah boarded a boat sailing in the opposite direction to Tarshish, one of the most distant places on earth (think Key West to Seattle). Not only did Jonah head down directionally, but spiritually in his heart as well.

**3. Jonah is willing to die. (vv 11-12)**

While on the boat headed to Tarshish, a violent storm comes upon them. The pagan men in fear call to Jonah sleeping below, “Get up! and “Cry out! to your God!” for they knew it was because of his running away God brought the storm upon them. Jonah, willing to give his life to save these pagan sailors remained defiant that God show mercy to the cruel Assyrians – who were not his people. Jonah was certain they did not deserve the mercy of God!

While God could get the message to Ninevah in a number of ways, he instead pursued his prophet fiercely. If we say “no” to God, we can expect a storm. Jonah knew why he was in a storm, but we may not know, so we trust God is up to something **bigger!**

Did you see how the pagan sailors came to recognize God’s sovereignty and worship YHWH! Only God is **big** enough for people who are not God’s people to become God’s people! Because of his love, He sends, and we have to go! (vv. 13-16)

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What aspects of Jonah (or actions) do we recognize in ourselves?
2. Pastor John preached that we need to “go.” Which “go” would be easier for you: to a non-believing family member or to a far-away place?
3. God’s love is all encompassing for everyone: believers and non-believers alike. How does the sailors’ behavior encourage us to “go”?
4. Where have you seen God’s mercy when you “ran”? Was there a “bigger” response after obedience?
5. What mission field are you working currently? How did God develop your heart to respond to this mission?