

Things We Should Know About Life, From Jonah

► Intro:

- story of Jonah

- **Jonah, prophet of God** during the reign of Jeroboam II, about 800 years before Christ
- **God commanded him to preach to Ninevites** (Assyrian city on the bank of the Tigris, Israel's enemy)
 - **but he fled** in the opposite direction to escape proclaiming God's message to the heathen city (120k people who didn't know the truth)
- **great storm** came upon the ship he escaped in, thrown over into the sea at his own request
- **Jonah swallowed** by a great fish
 - smell, mess, digestive juices, movement of fish, movement of organs
- **Jonah lived** in the belly of the fish for **three days**
- **Jonah repented and prayed** to God
- **God commanded fish, and it vomited Jonah up** on the shore
 - vomited mess
- **God again commanded Jonah to preach** to Ninevites
- **Jonah obeyed, preached, telling them** they would be overthrown in 40 days
- **Ninevites believed, fasted, repented** in hopes that God wouldn't destroy them
- **God saw their deeds, relented**, didn't destroy them
- **Jonah was grieved** that Nineveh was spared, asked God to take his life
 - but God taught Him** why about compassion by having a plant grow to give him shade and then wilt the next day

- What are some things we learn about life, from Jonah?

➤ **We can't hide from God**

- **Jon. 1:3-4, 8-10** Jonah tried to hide from God, but couldn't

- **1 Sam. 2:3** God is the God of knowledge – He knows everything

- **Ps. 139:7-12** God is everywhere, we can't flee His presence

- **God always knows where we are, what we're doing and saying, who we're with** – sees all and knows all

- **illus.: joke, parents have eyes in the back of their head**

- I was in about 3rd grade, rode bus to cub scout meeting, decided to get off one stop early and walk, for fun

- I thought everything was okay, but when I got home my mother knew what I'd done

- had no idea how she knew

- she had more than eyes in back of her head, she had eyes everywhere

- **illus.: shortly after we moved to Tampa, kids went to Bush Gardens**

- I picked them up, and started telling them about things they had done

- amazed I knew who they were with, and what they'd done

- asked how I knew

- told them: "You're in Tampa, and I know people!"

- **God's eyes are everywhere, because He is everywhere** – knows all, sees all, no one can hide

- **Heb. 4:13** no creature hidden from His sight, all things are open and laid bare to the Lord's eyes

- **positive aspect, if obeying God:**

- God always with us, help us, save us, protect us

- all things work together for good for those who love the Lord

- **negative aspect, if disobeying God:**

- **can't escape judgement and punishment** – give account, every idle word, every deed

- **illus.: think about a recent sin**

- **didn't want anyone else to see or know** about

- **but God was there watching, listening**

- how do you think God felt, what was He thinking, as He listened and watched

➤ **There are consequences for sin during life on earth** – can't hide from God

- **Jon. 1:11-12, 15-17** Jonah thrown into sea, swallowed by great fish – **consequence of sin**

- **describe being swallowed alive by fish:** sounds, water, touch, smell, force upon body to be swallowed, fear

- **illus.: thief on the cross, saved, but had to suffer the consequence of sin**

- although we're saved, if we sin, we still have to suffer the associated consequences

- **illus.: David, sin with Bathsheba, his punishment was death of his baby**

- although we're saved, other people may suffer as a result of our sin

- **illus.: today**

- **consequences for sexual sin:** STDs and AIDS (Rom. 1), children losing their childhood, babies born into homes ill-equipped to raise them and result in their suffering for life, degradation of society as a whole

- **alcohol and drugs:** broken homes, poverty, drunk drivers, murder, abuse of spouses and children, prison

- **we can't do the crime, and expect to avoid the consequence** – **earth** – **sin, repentant, hell**

- **Some people won't repent until they hit rock bottom** – can't hide from God
 - **Jon. 1:17-2:2** **Jonah repented after he was punished, and sought to obey God** – after he hit rock bottom
 - describe being in belly of fish: movement, sounds, dark, smell, touch, fear, anxiety, hopelessness after repent
 - **illus.: school of hard knocks** – hardheaded, hardhearted people
 - some people learn by experiencing the consequences of sin – e.g., **Jonah**
 - put their souls at risk:
 - most die in sin and will be punished in hell
 - a few learn from their mistakes and repent (**Matt. 7:13-14**)
 - **Heb. 12:5-6** **God chastens Christians, when they turn back to a life of sin**
 - **God's school of hard knocks**
 - life is a lot better when we learn from God's word, rather than be chastened – hard knocks
 - better to obey God without being chastened
 - than to suffer chastening of the Lord, and then obey
 - **application:**
 - #1: when someone refuses to believe in God, and want to live in sin, the quicker they suffer the consequence the better
 - parents try to lessen the consequence, which is not always best
 - #2: to help others, some times we have to let them hit rock bottom first
 - if want to help someone who isn't going to repent until they hit rock bottom, have to be patient and wait till they want help
 - sometimes we have to turn them over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, so they might be saved (**1 Cor. 5:5**)

➤ **If we repent and obey God, He saves us**

- **Jon. 2:7-10** God saved Jonah after he repented, changed his heart

- **describe being vomited up:** whale flailing to get close enough to expel Jonah on dry land, whale convulsing, vomited up Jonah with other food, smell, mess, filth, slime, hair and skin and clothes
- **describe feelings:** out of fish, now safe on shore, not in darkness inside whale, light, pray to God, dedicated to obey

- **God commands us to repent**

- **Lk. 13:3, 5** unless we repent, we will perish
- **Acts 17:30** God commands all men everywhere to repent
- **2 Pet. 3:9** God doesn't want anyone to perish, but for everyone to repent

- **application:**

- **#1: when we repent and obey God, He saves us**

- but we must continue to endure the abiding physical consequences of sin
- **illus.: thief** on the cross, saved, went to Paradise, still had to suffer painful death, crucifixion
- **#2: the best life on earth is one that avoids sin, and avoids the consequences of sin**
- although everyone can be saved, and life in heaven for eternity

➤ **People have to hear the message before they can repent and obey**

- **Jon. 3:1-5** Ninevites heard the word of God, believed, repented – **Rom. 10:17**

- 120K people didn't know the truth – their right from their left

- **application: our job is to get out the message, like Jonah**

- **we can't make people obey**
 - God doesn't hold us responsible for their obedience, just for getting out the message
- **illus.:**
 - **Ezekiel:** blood on his head if not get out the message
 - **Paul:** innocent of blood of all men, because he got the message out, the whole counsel of God
- **Are you innocent of the blood of all men?** – heart stopping question – friends, family, neighbors

➤ **- Jon. 4:1-3 we must put the souls of people before our own personal interests** to get the message out

- **Jon. 4:2** characteristics of God – we have to have the same characteristics
- **Jonah didn't want to preach** to them because he was afraid they would repent
 - Ninevites, their enemy, Jonah apparently wanted God to be angry at them and destroy them
- **Jonah put national interests before spiritual interests**

- **illus: have you ever harshly criticize people for their sin, but not share the gospel with them**

- **co-worker** comes in smelling like alcohol and hung over, criticize him behind his back
- **schoolmate** cheats on a test, criticize behind back
- **neighbor** talks to you, gossiping about others, listen, without sharing truth of gospel about gossip
- **when we do things like this, aren't we like Jonah** – not put soul's before our own interests

- **our job, as a church and individually, is get the gospel out to a lost and dying world**

- **we're doing that**, but are we doing it to the extent we should
- **what can we do differently as a church. . . .**
- **what can you do differently, individually. . . .**

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **Jon. 3:10** our deeds reflect what's in our hearts - God saw their deeds and relented

- **illus.:** boy tells girl he loves her, then lies to her about other girls – **deeds show not really love**

- **What do your deeds reflect? What do they show is in your heart?** – love God, love world, love Satan

- **inv.:** if you aren't a Christian. . . . / if you are a Christian. . . .