

Unbelievable

Episode 5: *Rebel on The Run!*

INTRODUCTION - God's Patient Pursuit!

2 Peter 3:15a

THE STORY - The Spiritual Fugitive takes Flight!

Jonah

- Context: Jonah prophesied under Jeroboam II, Israel's most powerful king (793-753 BC). Israel suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and their over zealous violence.
- Jonah's Defiance: Jonah headed to Tarshish in complete defiance of God's divine directive: "Go to the great city of Nineveh..."
- Desperate Cries: The Phoenician sailors were afraid and attempted to appease their gods: "And they threw the cargo into the sea..."
- Jonah's Declaration of Devotion: Jonah testified to being a true worshipper of the God of heaven who made the sea and the land.
- Death by Drowning: Jonah, the Spiritual Fugitive, attempts to escape God and the call on his life through the absolute flight of death: "Pick me up and hurl me into the Sea."
- Jonah's Destiny is Re-determined by a Divine Rescue: This is the 'twist' in the story, or the 'thunderbolt moment.' God has options you've never imagined when it comes to His call and His plans. Jonah's experience inside a sea creature was a hellish place to be; however, as dark as it was - it was a rescue! Jonah was rescued from drowning and divinely rerouted.
- Banished and Broken: Jonah turns to God from inside the fish with a heart of thankfulness.
- Jonah Fulfills His Mission: He goes to Nineveh despite the wickedness of the Ninevites, they responded and repented to Jonah's message of doom.
- Depressed and Displeased: Jonah regrets the repentance of the Ninevites
- God corrects Jonah: Rather than judgment Jonah receives a remedial lesson from God about His character and Jonah's call.

LOOKING DEEPER - Reading Below The Lines

Take Out #1 - WHEN YOU KNOW GOD WANTS YOU TO DO SOMETHING, DON'T RUN.

It is not in hearing God's words but in responding to them!

Matthew 12:41; John 14:15; 1 John 2:3

Take Out #2 - HUMAN WALLS OF PAIN, PREJUDICE, IDEOLOGY, RACE AND EVEN RELIGION SHOULD NEVER STAND BETWEEN A CHRIST-FOLLOWER AND THE PLAN OF GOD.

We are called to a love supreme! **Matthew 5:43-45; Matthew 22:36-40**

Take Out #3 - GOD'S CHARACTER IS COMPASSIONATE. HIS CALL ON OUR LIFE IS TO COMMUNICATE HIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS SO OTHERS CAN MAKE A CHOICE.

God's priority in us living out compassion is very, very high!

Psalm 145:8-9; Micah 6:8; Colossians 3:10-12

CONCLUSION - GOD IS GOD. No greater love is known.

John 15:1-17

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one new thing you learned or one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.

Look To The Book...

2. **Read JONAH 1:1-17 and 4:1-3.** a). What verse stands out to you in these passages? Why? b). Jonah's fatal flaw (Achilles' heel) was his resistance to be a channel of God's compassion to a people who were desperately lost in the dark. He allowed his personal experience (anger and painful feelings towards the Ninevites) to stand in the way of God using him to reflect His character to others. What are some possible obstructions for you when it comes to caring for others? c). Consider the following scenarios in Scripture and talk about the human wall that cuts off the channel of God's compassion (or potentially could) in each story: John 4 1:1-26, John 6:1-14, John 9:1-34 and Luke 15 (esp. vv 1,2). As an example we can see the barrier of prejudice in John 4. What are the other barriers and how can we relate to them today?

So What?...

3. How can we stimulate compassion? What can turn the tide? Discuss how the capacity to take different perspectives can help us live more compassionately. How does God's perspective on the evil people in Nineveh differ from Jonah's? Do you see your enemies from God's perspective?

Sean Wood @ The Meeting House - Sunday, August 6/13, 2006