

**“How Low Will You Go?”**  
**Jonah 1-2 / James 1:13-16**

**Introduction:**

1. This Morning - I Would Like For Us To Get Back:
  - To Our Series Through The Book Of Jonah!
    - That We Have Been Going Through:
      - Verse By Verse!
    - And We Have Learned Some Very Important Truths & Lessons:
      - Along The Way!
2. But One Interesting Thing About Jonah:
  - Is That There Are Certain Truths & Themes:
    - That Can Be Traced *Throughout* The Book As Well!
  - And One Of Those Themes:
    - Is What We Will Look At Today!
3. **IE:** Has There Ever Been A Time In Your Life:
  - When You Regretted The Fact:
    - That You Did Not Listen To Something Your Parents Told You When You Were Growing Up?
  - Many Times:
    - We Learn From Our Own Mistakes!
    - But Why Is It:
      - That We Often Don't Want To Learn From The Mistakes Of Others?
  - Much Of The Advice Your Parents Gave You:
    - When You Were Young:
      - They Learned The Hard Way!
      - They Learned By Making Their Own Mistakes!
    - And So - They Didn't Want You To Have To:
      - Learn It The Way They Did!
    - And They Did This Out Of Love!
      - Didn't They!
  - But, All To Often:
    - We Didn't Listen!
    - We Thought We Could Do Things Better:
      - Than They Did!
    - And Instead Of Learning From Their Example:
      - Perhaps You Had To Learn Your Lesson The Hard Way Too!
  - We Are Stubborn People That Way – Aren't We?
    - But, Did You Know That:
      - God Does The Same Thing That Your Parents Tried To Do?
4. God Teaches Us Truths & Lessons:
  - Through Examples:
    - Like Jonah!
  - And Especially Through Jonah:
    - At First – He Is An Example Of What Not To Do!
      - So You Don't Have To Learn His Lesson The Hard Way!
    - But - Have You Been Listening?
      - What Have You Been Learning?
    - Or Will You Keep On Learning Your Lessons:
      - The Hard Way?
5. One Important Lesson:
  - We Learn From The First Part Of Jonah:
    - Is The Dangerous & Deadly Trajectory Of Sin!
      - It Is Like A Constant Downward Spiral!
  - And This Is A Lesson:
    - That We All Too Often Learn The Hard Way!
      - Instead Of Listening To What The Lord Has To Say & Obeying & Applying It To Our Lives!
  - In Fact:
    - Jonah Is An Object Lesson To Us:

- Of The Truth We Find Clearly Stated In The New Testament:

- In James 1:13-16:

- "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: / But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. / Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. / Do not err, my beloved brethren!"

- And The Progression Of Sin In Verses 14 & 15 Can Be Clearly Seen & Traced Through Jonah's Experience!

6. This Is An Important Lesson:

- That We All Need To Learn & Remember:

- About Sin – In General!

- And About Your Sin – In Particular!

- And To Take Any Sin:

- Very Seriously In Your Life!

- Even As God Does!

\* What Can We Learn From Jonah's:

1. **Sinful Desire?**

- James 1:14a Says:

- "But Every Man Is Tempted, When He Is Drawn Away Of His Own Lust!"

- A Lust - Is Simply A Desire!

- Something That You Want Really, Really Badly!

- Sometimes Your Lust Is: A Purely Evil Desire:

- Which God Clearly Denounces & Condemns Through His Word!

- One Of Those Sins – The Sin Of Homosexuality – We Looked At Last Week!

- But Other Times Your Lust Is: A Natural Desire:

- Which In & Of Itself Is Not Sinful – Like Hunger!

- But It Can Lead You To Temptation & To Sin, If You Try To Fulfill That Desire:

- Outside Of God's Plan!

- But Either Way – You Are Tempted:

- When You Are "Drawn Away" By Your Own Lust!

- Your Own Desires!

- To Go Your Own Way!

- Instead Of Going God's Way!

- And To Do Your Own Thing!

- Instead Of Doing God's Will!

- And This Is What Jonah's Sinful Desire Was Like!

- Back At The Beginning Of Jonah:

- 1:1-3a - "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, / Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. / But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD!"

- There Was A Conflict:

- Between The Desire Of God!

- And The Desire Of His Own Prophet, Jonah!

- God's Desire:

- Was For Jonah To Go To Nineveh!

- With A Very Important Message!

- But Jonah's Desire:

- Did Not Go Along With God's Desire!

- Instead - Jonah:

- Wanted To Go His Own Way!

- And Wanted To Do His Own Thing!

- And So He Ran!

- He Fled - In The Opposite Direction!

- In Order To Get Away From The Presence Of The Lord!

- Or So He Thought!

- How Many Times:

- Is Your Desire Like Jonah's?

- You May Know What God's Will & Desire Is!
  - Like Jonah Did!
  - Jonah Knew What God Wanted Him To Do!
  - Jonah Knew Where God Wanted Him To Go!
    - It Was Very Clear To Him!
    - There Was No Confusion At All!
  - God's Will For You Is Often Crystal Clear:
    - As You Look Into His Word!
- But You May Not Like What God's Will & Desire Is!
  - Like Jonah! For Whatever Reason:
  - Jonah Did Not Like God's Will For Him!
  - Jonah Did Not Like God's Word To Him!
- So He Followed His Own Will & Desire:
  - He Was Drawn Away By "His Own Lust!"
  - And Look Where It Took Him!
- His Sinful Desire Would Drag Him Down Even Further!
  - And He Was "Drawn Away Of His Own Lust!"
    - **IE:** Used To Go To Riley Park - Throw Sticks Into The Creek - And Then Watch The Current Take It Down & Over & Through The Rocks - It Was Like The Water Would Just Suck It Down So Quickly! This Is What Sinful Desires Will Do To You!
- How Low Will You Go?
  - When It Comes To Your Own Sinful Desires?
  - Or Will You Listen To God's Word?
  - And Will You Obey God's Will?
- You Don't Need Learn This Lesson The Hard Way!
  - You Can Learn From Jonah's Example!

\* What Can We Learn From The Example Of Jonah's:

## 2. ***Sinful Deception?***

- James 1:14 Continues:
  - "But Every Man Is Tempted, When He Is Drawn Away Of His Own Lust, And Enticed!"
    - To Be Enticed - Means To Be Deceived!
      - Even To Be Lured Into A Trap, Like A Fish Lured By The Bait On A Hook!
    - **IE:** Did You Know That Fish Are Not The Smartest Animals That God Created! For My 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, We Went Deep Sea Fishing For Blue-Fish! We Didn't Even Need To Bait Our Hooks - We Just Had A Shiny Silver Lure - We Caught Nearly A Dozen Of Those Fish!
      - But We Aren't That Smart Either, When We Deceive Ourselves About Our Own Sin & Its Consequences!
        - When We Think That It Really Is No Big Deal!
- But This Is What Jonah's Sinful Deception Was Like!
  - Again In Jonah 1:3, It Says That:
    - "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD!"
- Really - How Smart Was That?
  - Jonah Was Lured By The Thought:
    - That He Could Actually "Flee - From The Presence Of The Lord!"
  - He Was Enticed & Deceived By His Own Mind:
    - Of Something That Was The Opposite Of The Truth!
      - A Truth That He Knew!
      - And Even A Truth That He Preached!
  - And Yet - He Believed A Lie!
    - That It Was Even Possible To Escape God's Presence!
      - But: That ***Was*** A Lie!
  - You Cannot Escape The Presence Of The Lord!
    - Psalm 139:7-10 - "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? / If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. / If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; / Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me!"
- How Many Times:

- Is Your Deception Like Jonah's?
- You May Know The Truth:
  - Like Jonah Did!
  - You May Have Even Told Others The Truth!
    - At Home / In Church / At Work!
- But You Do Not Like The Truth!
  - And So You Deceive Yourself Into Thinking That The Truth:
    - Does Not Apply To You!
- And You Are Lured Into Thinking:
  - That God Will Ignore Your Sin & Your Disobedience!
  - **IE:** There Is An Annoying White Sign That Is Frequently Seen Along Our Roads - That Pesky Speed Limit Sign! But What Happens When You Like To Yourself, And Think That It Doesn't Apply To You? At Some Point, You Will Learn The Lesson The Hard Way, Won't You?
- How Low Will You Go?
  - When It Comes To Your Own Sinful Deception?
    - Will You Remember **God's** Truth?
    - Will You Believe **His** Truth?
  - Don't Learn This Lesson The Hard Way!
    - Learn From The Example Of Jonah!
    - Because His Sinful Deception Would Drag Him Down Even Further – To Disobedience!

\* So: What Can We Learn From Jonah's:

### 3. **Sinful Disobedience?**

- James 1:15a Tells Us:
  - "Then When Lust Hath Conceived, It Bringeth Forth Sin!"
    - The Word "Conceive" Here Has The Idea Of Getting Ahold Of You! Capturing You! Taking You Prisoner & Not Letting You Go!
      - Sin Has This Affect On You, Once It Enters Into Your Life & Heart!
- And This Is What Jonah's Sinful Disobedience Was Like!
  - Jonah Kept Getting Deeper & Deeper Into His Sin!
    - There Is No Such Thing As:
      - A "Moderate Sin!"
  - Look How Far Jonah Goes:
    - To Get Away From The Presence Of The Lord!
  - In Jonah 1:3:
    - "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD!"
- Look At The Distance:
  - He Was Willing To Go!
    - In Order To Flee From God's Presence!
  - He Was Willing To Go:
    - All The Way To Tarshish!
    - Which Was Likely The Farthest Place He Could Think Of!
  - And This Is The Place Where Sin Will Always Take You!
    - When It Takes Hold Of You!
- Look At The Cost:
  - He Was Willing To Pay!
    - In Order To Flee From God's Presence!
  - He Was Willing To Pay:
    - Whatever It Cost!
    - It Could Have Been The Entire Fare For That Ship, So It Could Go On Its Voyage As Quickly As Possible!
  - And This Is The Price That Sin Will Always Require From You!
    - When It Takes Hold Of You!
  - **IE:** Think Of Those Who Have Been "Captured" By Sinful Addictions! To Drugs / Alcohol / Gambling / Sex! They Get To The Point Where They Are Willing To Sell Everything They Have - And Even Steal - Just To Satisfy Their Craving & Their Urge! Sin Can Be Very, Very Expensive!

- But How Many Times:
  - Is Your Disobedience Like Jonah's?
  - Sin Promises So Much!
    - But Delivers So Little!
  - And Once It Takes Hold In Your Heart & Life:
    - It Will Keep On Taking!
      - And You Will Be Its Captive!
  - And Unless It Is Stopped:
    - "Sin Always Takes Us Farther Than We Imagined We Would Go, Faster Than We Ever Intended!" (Rick Phillips)
- How Low Will You Go?
  - When It Comes To Your Own Sinful Disobedience?
  - Are You Willing To Go:
    - The Distance It Will Take You?
      - And The Distance Is Very, Very Far!
  - Are You Willing To Pay:
    - The Price It Will Cost You?
      - And The Cost Is Very, Very High!
  - And Jonah's Sin Wasn't Finished With Him Yet!
    - It Would Drag Him Even Deeper:
      - To The Point Of His Own Death!
  - But You Don't Need To Learn This Lesson The Hard Way!

\* And Then, What Can We Learn From Jonah's:

#### 4. ***Sin-Caused Death?***

- James 1:15 Tells Us The Final Result Of Sin:
  - "And Sin, When It Is Finished, Bringeth Forth Death!"
    - Death Was The Real Distance:
      - His Sin Took Him!
    - And Death Was The Real Price:
      - His Sin Cost Him!
- Remember What Jonah's Sin-Caused Death Was Like?
  - In His Own Prayer, After Being Rescued By The Fish:
    - Jonah Was Described What He Felt As He Was Drowning! Dying!
  - 2:3-4a - "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. / Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight!"
  - 2:5-6 - "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. / I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever!"
    - IE: When You Travel On An Airplane, You Will Come To A "Point Of No Return!" There Is Not Enough Fuel To Take You Back To Where You Started! This Was, To Jonah At Least, His Point Of No Return! There Was No Hope To Survive!
- And If The Lord Had Not Intervened:
  - To Rescue & Save Jonah!
  - He Surely Would Have Died!
    - Romans 6:23 - "For The Wages Of Sin Is Death!"
  - Just Look At How Far:
    - His Sinful Desire Had Taken Him!
    - Deeper & Deeper!
    - Further & Further!
    - To The Point Of Despair & Even Certain Death!
- And You Need To Remember:
  - That This Is What Your Sin Does As Well!
    - Sin Is A Very Serious Matter!
  - Sin – Any Sin:
    - Will Drag You Down!
    - Even To A "Point Of No Return!"
- But - Sin Not Only Brings Forth Your Own Death:

- Your Sin Brought About:
  - The Death Of The Lord Jesus Christ!
  - Isaiah 53:4-6 - "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. / But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. / All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all!"
- Jesus Went The Full Distance & Paid The Full Price For Your Sin:
  - So That You Wouldn't Have To!
- So - Why Would We Go There Again?
  - Through Our Sin?
  - When You Think Of:
    - The Distance Jesus Willingly Went For Your Sin!
    - And The Price Jesus Willingly Paid For Your Sin!
  - Why Won't You Learn The Lesson Of His Death?
    - That You Can Receive His Forgiveness!
    - That You Can Forsake Your Sin!
    - That You Can Then Follow & Serve Him!
  - And When You Do This:
    - The Deadly, Downward Spiral Of Your Sin Is Stopped!
  - Just Like God Sent The Fish:
    - To Rescue Jonah From His Sin-Caused Death!
  - God Sent To You & To Me The Lord Jesus:
    - To Rescue Us From Our Sin-Caused Death & Separation From Him!

**Conclusion:**

1. So - How Low Will You Go? How Far Will Your Sin Take You?
  - You Don't Have To Wait:
    - As Long As Jonah Did To Be Rescued From Your Sin!
  - You Don't Need To Learn This Lesson:
    - The Hard Way!
  - You Can Cry Out To The Lord:
    - At Any Stage Of Your Sin:
      - "Lord, Save Me!"
    - Because He Can! And Because He Will!
2. And Then:
  - You Can & You Must:
    - "Go And Sin No More!"
  - Because The Downward, Slippery Slope Of Your Sin:
    - Has Been Stopped!
  - For: "Jesus Paid It All! All To Him I Owe! Sin Had Left A Crimson Stain! He Washed It White As Snow!"

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