

Taking it Home:

- Are you running from God, like Jonah? What will it take to bring you back to where God desires you to be? You can never run away from God—He is Omnipresent and He knows where you are at all times! Are there times you attempt to run from God?
- Do you have prejudices or bias' in your life against an individual, people group, religion, or ethnicity that you do not want to see know Christ? What if God wanted you to cross over & reach out to cross one of those barriers, would you submit or run? Why?
- Have you (or possibly now) felt so distant from God because you've been running from Him for a long time? Have you felt like giving up on God? How did God restore Jonah? Even through Jonah's disobedience and reluctance how did God use Jonah in a significant way to make a huge impact in the people of Nineveh?
- In Jonah 1:4, 17, God demonstrates His omnipotent power over creation by creating a huge storm which thoroughly frightened the seasoned sailors (Jon. 1:5, 10, 14) and He sovereignly prepared a large fish to swallow Jonah (Jon. 1:17). God definitely got Jonah's attention! Look back on your life as a believer; do you see God working in mysterious ways to get your attention? In what way?

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

Jonah and the World Beyond
The Downward Spiral
Jonah 1

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
September 25, 2011

The Downward Spiral

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelfc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 25, 2011

Jonah 1

Quick Review: Yahweh calls on Jonah to call out the calamity which defined the Assyrian people of Nineveh. The Ninevites were a cruel, wicked, polytheistic empire of people who created fear and caused tyranny to the surrounding nations. The mission God has planned for Jonah, as a spokesperson for God to the Ninevites, violates Jonah's perception of the way the world works, and so he flees, embarking on a downward spiral that exposes the calamity of his own soul.

My Story:

- Have you ever totally despised a nation or culture that is intrinsically evil? You have loathed this nation or culture because it has only brought pain, suffering and death to its own people and people bordering it or surrounding it? Discuss the details.
- Have you, or someone you know ever had to deliver a message to people you (they) didn't like, and you knew the message you (they) had to deliver would NOT be taken very well by the people you (they) were delivering it too? How did you feel delivering the message knowing the people receiving it would not be happy about it? Discuss your experience.
- In the recesses of your soul, have you ever had the deep feeling that there are some people on this earth that you hope NEVER respond favorably to the Gospel of Christ, yet, though reluctant, God used you to reach these people for the Gospel of Christ? Share your thoughts.

Growing Deeper:

- God demonstrates His incredible mercy and love for all people, even nations who do not know God. God had been dealing in the affairs of the Assyrian Empire many years before Jonah's arrival to preach repentance so they would turn to the God of Israel for salvation. What are a few of the providential incidences Pastor Matthew spoke about that had been occurring in the Assyrian Empire that led up to Jonah's arrival to deliver God's message to them?
- Jonah chapter 1 clearly describes God's call for Jonah to preach to the wicked Ninevites and Jonah's refusal to comply too God's calling. What are some of the reasons Pastor Matthew gave for **why** Jonah attempted to run away from his God-designed commission to preach to the city of Nineveh?
- Many have stated that the historical narrative of Jonah is merely a myth or an allegory; they state that Jonah was not a real historical figure. What are some of the Scriptural evidences of the very real person of Jonah? (**Cf. 2 Kings 14:25-27; Matt. 12:38-41**). If God created the universe and He is the God of miracles, raising the dead, healing the sick and healing the impaired, and drawing people to repentance and salvation, is God capable of using a large fish to swallow a reluctant prophet so His will, will be accomplished?
- The book of Jonah covers many doctrines, describes numerous dimensions of God's attributes as well as several "types of Christ." Some of the greatest attributes of God is His omnipotence (all powerful; Jer. 32:17); omnipresence (all everywhere; Ps. 139:7-10), and omniscience (all knowing; Ps. 139:1-4). If Jonah was already a seasoned prophet of God (2 Kings 14:25-27), wouldn't Jonah have known that He could NOT run away from God nor hide from God? (Cf. Jonah 1:3-4). Why do you suppose Jonah attempted to flee from the presence of God?
- Pastor Matthew mentioned several "downward spirals" Jonah experienced in this historical narrative. What were the "downward spirals" Pastor Matthew mentioned? (At least 4)
- What is the collateral damage (damage that impacted others because of Jonah's sin) caused by Jonah's disobedient heart? Out of the collateral damage in Chapter 1, name the redemptive results created because of God's direct dealing with His reluctant prophet?