The Cost of Disobedience

9.1.19

Message 2

Jonah Series

Jonah 1:1–17 (CSB)

**JONAH’S FLIGHT**

**1**The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: **2**“Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because their evil has come up before me.” **3**Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the Lord’s presence. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the Lord’s presence.

**4**But the Lord threw a great wind onto the sea, and such a great storm arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart. **5**The sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his god. They threw the ship’s cargo into the sea to lighten the load. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down to the lowest part of the vessel and had stretched out and fallen into a deep sleep.

**6**The captain approached him and said, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up! Call to your god., Maybe this god will consider us, and we won’t perish.”

**7**“Come on!” the sailors said to each other. “Let’s cast lots. Then we’ll know who is to blame for this trouble we’re in.” So they cast lots, and the lot singled out Jonah. **8**Then they said to him, “Tell us who is to blame for this trouble we’re in. What is your business, and where are you from? What is your country, and what people are you from?”

**9**He answered them, “I’m a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

**10**Then the men were seized by a great fear and said to him, “What is this you’ve done?” The men knew he was fleeing from the Lord’s presence because he had told them. **11**So they said to him, “What should we do to you so that the sea will calm down for us?” For the sea was getting worse and worse.

**12**He answered them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea so that it will calm down for you, for I know that I’m to blame for this great storm that is against you.” **13**Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they couldn’t because the sea was raging against them more and more.

**14**So they called out to the Lord: “Please, Lord, don’t let us perish because of this man’s life, and don’t charge us with innocent blood! For you, Lord, have done just as you pleased.” **15**Then they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. **16**The men were seized by great fear of the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

**17**The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

# 1. Last week, I introduced us to the Prophet Jonah.

A. Let me recap for a few moments:

1. Jonah was a prophet to the nation of Israel.

a. He had already been a successful prophet.

b. He had survived ministering in a sinful and dangerous Kingdom.

2. Now God was asking Jonah to go to the City of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. (Show Slide of Map)

a. Nineveh was the home of some of the most cruel and evil people of the day.

b. They were known to flay men alive and use their skins for numerous things.

c. They made lanterns out of bodies and hung them on the walls of their city.

d. Everywhere they went, they personified evil.

e. They also were the Kingdom God chose to bring judgment upon Israel and led them into captivity.

3. Jonah had no desire to minister to people such as this.

a. For God to send a prophet to declare impending judgment meant that God was also declaring the possibility of repentance.

b. Jonah wanted these people to die, not live.

c. He wanted vengeance, not mercy.

B. Jonah let his personal desire and conviction get in the way of God’s call for his life and this ultimately led to disobedience.

1. Jonah rents a boat to flee in the opposite direction of God’s call and God’s presence.

2. You can’t walk in God’s presence while also walking in disobedience.

3. To walk in God’s presence is a conscience decision.

4. Jonah chose to walk away from God, instead of walking with God.

C. This decision of disobedience precipitated the storm that came next.

# 2. The Storm was God’s response to Jonah’s sin.

A. Before we can see the redeemable aspects of the storm, we must realize that this particular storm could have been prevented and wasn’t God’s original plan.

1. We all have a tendency to over-spiritualize some of our situations.

a. Some of you all are optimists by nature.

b. I don’t have that problem.

c. But what you do is you take a situation and immediately think of the good that might come out of it.

d. When we immediately jump to the potential, we forget to repent.

2. Calling this storm a “good thing” overlooks the gravity of the situation.

a. We shouldn’t celebrate storms that originate from our sin.

b. We shouldn’t spin these moments into something beautiful before we acknowledge that the sin is directly related to our disobedience to God.

c. Disobedience leads to Storms of God’s leading but of our making.

3. God was definitely involved in this particular storm.

a. God’s purposes were good:

1. He wanted Jonah to repent.

2. He wanted Jonah to change directions.

3. He wanted Jonah back in His presence.

b. The purpose of the Storm wasn’t to merely restore Jonah back to the ministry but to restore him to the Lord’s Presence.

c. Yet, this storm had the potential of killing Jonah and those in the boat with him.

B. **Storms of Disobedience put those around us in danger.**

1. Jonah’s sin threatened to kill the sailors on the boat with him.

a. The nature of sin is destruction.

b. Sin is never happy simply hurting you, but wants to kill you and destroy those around you.

c. Sin is never committed in isolation.

d. There is no such thing as a victimless sin.

2. **The wages of sin are passed around until those wages are paid in full.**

a. Not necessarily referring to generational curses here.

b. But there is a cost to sin and a price to be paid for disobedience.

c. Without Jesus, we and our loved ones are left holding the bill.

3. Only Jesus can pay the wages of our sins in full. (Rom. 6:23).

a. Jonah’s decision, if not dealt with, had terrible consequences.

b. The sailors would have died.

c. The Ninevites would have been robbed of the opportunity to repent.

d. Israel would have lost a great prophet.

4. We must recognize that our sin affects those around about us and hurt more than us.

C. **Storms of disobedience leave us callous toward others.**

1. Jonah didn’t care.

a. These were a bunch of pagan sailors doing a job.

b. Why should he care if they died with him?

c. Again, the same prophet who had been led to rescue Israel had no compassion for the lost around him.

2. Sin endangers my capacity for love.

a. Because God is the author and source of love, when I am running from the Lord’s Presence I am also running away from Love.

b. I can’t love others like I’m supposed to when I am living in sin and disobedience.

3. I don’t know what kind of guy Jonah was.

a. But this was not his best moment.

b. He knew he was the cause of the storm and he knew he could fix it.

c. Instead, he went to the bottom of the boat so he could die in peace.

**D. Storms of Disobedience take us further than we intended.**

1. Throughout the first chapter, there is Hebrew word play.[[1]](#endnote-1)

a. The same root word is used to say Jonah went “down” to Joppa, “down” into the ship, “Down below deck” and “down” into deep sleep.

b. **Jonah’s sleeping while everyone else is in chaos is his lowest moment and his furthest point away from God.**

2. This is not what Jonah had planned.

a. This isn’t what his dream was.

b. He didn’t want to die like this, but here he was because of his sin.

c. Here is a truth about sin from an old song by the Cathedral Quartet:

Sin will take you farther than you wanna go  
Slowly but wholly taking control  
Sin will leave you longer than you wanna stay  
Sin will cost you far more than you wanna pay

3. Some of you here today are in a place you never wanted to be in because of either your sin or the sin of someone close to you.

a. If so, I want to give you hope.

b. Even though we can completely mess things up, Storms of Disobedience can be redeemed.

**E. Storms of disobedience can be redeemed.**

**1.** Jonah 1 is not only about Jonah and his sin.

a. It is also about God’s pursuit of Jonah.

b. [Psa 139:7 NIV] 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

c. God’s love for us is not determined by our credit worthiness.

d. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2. Although Jonah was running away from God, God was running after Jonah.

a. The Storm that had the potential for destroying Jonah also had the potential of leading Jonah back to God.

b. We will discuss this more fully in Jonah Chapter 2.

3. Some of us are in the midst of the greatest Storm of our lives.

a. If we continue to run away from God in this, this storm will break us.

b. But if we will seek God in the midst of the Storm, the promise of Romans 8:28 comes into play:

[Rom 8:28 NIV] 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of **those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose.

c. We cannot claim that promise apart from God.

d. I cannot walk in open defiance and disobedience and expect my sin to lead to good.

e. But in repentance, God redeems even the storms of our making.

# 3. Today, let us be reminded of our sinfulness and God’s mercy.

A. Too often, I’m a lot like Jonah.

1. I follow God when I feel like it.

2. I am obedient as long as it is agreeable to me.

3. I allow myself to wallow in self-pity and sin, unaware of the opportunity to witness to those around me and numb to the pain of others.

a. Eventually, Jonah did share about his God to the foreigners.

b. Eventually, they did experience the power of God and even sacrificed to him.

c. But Jonah was too consumed by his anger towards God to notice the opportunities around him.

B. I can be consumed by my sin or by God’s call but not both.

1. Today, I invite all of us to take the opportunity to get right with God.

2. **Some of us are living in an excused disobedience.**

a. Jonah’s response to going to Nineveh was reasonable.

b. He had been a solid follower of God up until this point.

c. But now something had shifted.

3. If we aren’t vigilant, we too can make the fatal shift from obedience to disobedience.

C. Maybe this morning, you aren’t fully obedient.

1. You are good in most areas, but there is an area of your world that God is dealing with you in or calling you too, and you are hesitating.

2. This morning, I want to invite all of us to take a moment to double check our obedience to God and to submit to whatever He is calling us to.

1. Jonah’s deep sleep is the bottom of a quick slide from “a prophet in the presence of the Lord in Israel” to “deadly indifference in the hull of a sinking ship.” The Hebrew uses the same word root to describe how Jonah “went down to Joppa” (1:3, *yarad*), “went aboard [the ship]” (1:3, *yarad*), and “had gone below deck” (1:5, *yarad*). When he falls into a “deep sleep” (1:5, *yeradam*), the Hebrew words are a play on similar sounds (*yarad/yeradam*). The second root (*radam*) is repeated by the captain, who says, “How can you sleep [*nireddam*]?” Jonah’s sleeping is the bottom of his flight from Yahweh (see further comments at 2:7). The captain tells Jonah to “Get up!”—in essence, to reverse his direction from “down” to “up.” The captain uses the same word (*qum*) that Yahweh spoke to Jonah at the beginning (1:2; lit., “Get up and go”). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)