Series: Running from God.

**Safe Harbours**

Jonah 1:1-17 January 8, 2017

1. Selfishness chooses Tarshish over Nineveh:

Running from God takes many forms.

a. We run from God by ignoring His commands.

* V.2 *Arise, go to Nineveh*
* V.3 *But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish*
* V.3 *He went down to Joppa*
* V.3 *He … found a ship … and went down into it.*
* V.5 *Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship*

b. We run from God by ignoring His truth.

* V.3 *Jonah rose to flee … from the presence of the LORD.*
* V.3 *… to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD*
* Jeremiah 23:24 *Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.*

c. We run from God by ignoring His warnings.

* V.4 *But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.*

d. We run from God by ignoring His compassion.

* V.6 *Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”*

e. We run from God by hiding behind empty religion.

* V.9 *And he said … “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”*

f. We run from God by wallowing in self-pity.

* V.12 *He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you*

g. If Jonah was on the run, what are the chances that you are too?

Q. There were many ways that Jonah ‘ran from God.’ Which one of those are you most tempted to take in your own life?

Q. At the heart of Jonah’s disobedience toward God was a deep-seated racism that believed that Jews deserved God’s mercy and Ninevites didn’t. It’s easy to see other people’s prejudice but when are you tempted to be prejudiced towards people who are different than you?

Q. Jonah had a lack of compassion toward Nineveh and even the sailors on the boat. Who do you feel is the Nineveh that God is calling you or your group to minister to?

2. God refuses to give up on us:

His mercy comes wrapped in many packages.

a. God pursues us by giving us assignments that expose our hearts.

* V.2 *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city*

b. God pursues us by blocking our path away from Him.

* V.4 *But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea*

c. God pursues us by putting people in our life to warn us.

* V.6 *What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god!*
* V.10 *Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!”*

d. God pursues us by controlling ‘chance’ events to speak to us.

* V.7 *So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.*

Q. What are some of the hard assignments that have exposed weaknesses in your faith or character?

Q. How can you tell if you’re in a hard assignment designed to expose something in your life or just facing something that’s hard? How do you know if the storm you’re in is God’s mercy or Satan’s attack?

Q. What do the sailors’ questions reveal about how God might use non-Christians in our lives?

3. The only way to a safe harbour is through the sign of Jonah.

1. You won’t reach safe harbour through empty religion.

* V.5 *Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god.*

1. You won’t reach safe harbour through human reason.

* V.5 *And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.*
* V.13 … *Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not*

1. You won’t reach safe harbour by ignoring the storm.

* V.5 *… But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.*

1. You reach safe harbour through repentance and faith in the sign of Jonah.

* V.16 *Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.*
* V.17 *And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*
* Matthew 12:40 *For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Q. Other than repentance, which of the options above are you most often tempted to take when you face one of life’s storms?

Q. What are some ways that your group could ‘wake up’ to the mission that God has given us?

Prayer: Take time to repent of any ways that you have been running from God and ask God for wisdom and help in responding to the mission He’s given you. Pray for the Ninevites in your life!

**Notes:**