

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

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Running away from God.

Horses don't like to be caught, and so they will run. Instead of trying to catch him, I make him run, and the very thing he's running away from, he's having to do, so eventually he will stop, lower his head and walk up to me.

Running away is more about the away, than running to something.

Reasons we run from God.

1. We don't want to be told what to do.
2. We don't want to miss out.
3. We confuse life with God...when life goes bad for us, we think God is bad.

Jonah was the leading prophet in Israel – and a prophet at that time had to be 100% right – all the time. God spoke to Jonah, telling him to “Arise, go to Ninevah.” This would be like God telling us to go to an ISIS terrorist camp and tell them to stop blowing stuff up and repent. Would we run away or obey?

Jonah 1 1-17: ¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” ³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. (Jonah ran away. We would the same.) He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that part. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

(People running from God make crazy decisions. Jonah getting on a boat to run from God was crazy because half of the boats heading that direction didn't make it and it's a given that some of the crew will die along the way.)

⁴Then the LORD (very powerful words...when you run from God, you will have some 'then the Lord' moments) sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. The wind and the whale are God's mercy, not his wrath. If you're looking for God's wrath, look for the guy who gets on the ship and God does nothing.

⁵All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. Running from God not only affects us, but affects everyone around us. ***But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶The captain went to***

him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” Jonah was running from God, he sure didn’t want to talk to him right now, runners are usually the last one to see the connection between their running from God and the mess their lives have become, everyone else can see it, but not you.

⁷Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” ⁹He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. ¹⁰This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.) ¹¹The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” ¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will soon become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” ¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. The very thing Jonah tried to avoid was happening, the men feared God and repented.

Even if you run, God’s word gets done.

¹⁷ Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:1 ¹ From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.
You can run from God, but you can’t outrun God.

All through the Bible we see that God views you the way a parent views their child, and we discipline children because we love them.

At what point did Jonah repent? One day in the whale - 2 days, afternoon of the third day? I think it was when the sailors picked him up and counted 1, 2, 3. Jonah was saying OK, I will go. God allowed Jonah to be trapped in a fish for three long days to make sure he got the message. God chased Jonah down not to pay him back, but to bring him back.