

Introduction: The familiar parable in Luke 15 – ‘The Prodigal Son’ – is also about the other (older) brother. Why mention this? Because Jonah was both in this book, and you may be too!

I. Running From God May Seem Easy!

- A. A ship was available. Jonah just went to sleep; it seemed so easy!
- B. And Jonah was willing to pay the price (for a long, costly trip).
- C. What really was driving Jonah? Verse 9a suggests that it was his national identity that was most important to him – important enough to choose to go in the opposite direction from God’s call and from God! There’s nothing wrong with loving one’s country, but when that love (or any other) puts God in second place, it’s called *idolatry*.
- D. How foolish Jonah was! And not only foolish, but hypocritical (v.9 – ref. to ‘fearing God’, when he neither turned from evil or heeded God’s voice Proverbs 3:7; 8:13; Isaiah 50:10). We see Jonah and are forced to think “This was a prophet?!? How deserving of God’s wrath!”

REMEMBER, THERE IS ONE WHO NEVER ‘RAN’; WHOSE FOOD WAS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT HIM!

II. But God Had A Better Plan For Jonah

(Notice that God still has a plan, even when His servants have a different one!)

- A. Having sent His word, God sent a storm to hinder Jonah’s flight (we’ll return to this in a few minutes)
- B. He used the captain’s words, which paralleled His own (“rise, call” in vv. 2 and 6)
- C. He used the lot cast by the sailors – v.7 – cf. Proverbs 16:33
- D. He used the unbelieving sailors (v.5a) to raise issues (v.8-10) and to show mercy (v.13). What a stroke of irony that those men had such patience and showed such mercy (we may also, at times, be put to shame by the kindness of those who don’t believe)
- E. He even used Jonah to bring sailors to humble faith, though Jonah was not present by that time!

WE’RE REMINDED THAT WHEN GOD’S PLANS AND OUR DIVERGE, HIS ARE ALWAYS BETTER!

III. Jonah’s Relationship With God And God’s Storm

- A. Jonah loved his nation and didn’t want to do anything that might lead to mercy for its enemies. He loved his people more than he loved God. Do you love anything more than you love God? Quite possibly! That’s one reason (besides the fact that there is yet sin in us) why we sin! When we sin, it is partly habit, but it is also because we like the feeling that sin gives us more than we love God at that moment (cp. Heb. 11:24-25 – “the passing pleasures of sin”).

But there’s much more to this matter. Choosing to sin isn’t **only** about pleasure; it is also about not trusting God to do what is best for you (like Adam and Eve). Jonah didn’t want God’s will because God’s will might not fit in with what Jonah thought was best, and you and I also do the same.

B. God sends storms into the lives of His people. Sometimes they are a direct response to sin (as with Jonah), but not all the time. But what ‘storms’ always do is bring into the light what’s in our hearts: Trust in God and His good purposes, OR self-righteousness, self-trust, self-pity, or significant self-interest. But what storms don’t come to do is destroy you. Rather, God sends them to destroy attachment to this world and sin, and to build up what is good.

Conclusion: But here is even better news: there is ONE WHO BORE THE STORM THAT SIN DESERVES at the cross. The biggest storm is the final judgment that is yet to come, but God in the Person of the Lord Jesus has taken that storm on Himself for all who turn from sin and trust the Savior. With that storm taken care of, all others can be seen in the proper light and you can trust God in the midst of them. Lord willing, we’ll look more at how this book directs our attention to the Savior who took that storm in the coming weeks.