

# You Can't Outrun God, so Why Try?

Do you hear the voice of God?

When you hear His call, do you walk in obedience or run away?

God will never ask us to do anything that is not in our best interest, yet some of us turn away when He lays out a path. God will never ask you to do something that is only for His benefit. Selfishness is not in His nature. God calls us to a life of obedience because He wants what is best for us. A life of reverence requires belief and trust in the *goodness* of God.

Jonah is a person who did not believe that God had his best interest in mind.

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

Verse 1 is an extraordinary moment. The word of the Lord came, and God Himself spoke to Jonah. When God gave Jonah the assignment to go to Nineveh, He revealed Jonah's purpose: to shatter the bondage of wickedness in the city.

Interestingly, God called Nineveh a great city. It was large and significant. However, it was not the greatness of the city that gained the attention of God, but its wickedness.

Similarly, the United States of America has been called a great nation. Perhaps the greatest in all of history. I wonder if it is our greatness or our wickedness that is gaining the

attention of God?

Jonah's response to the Lord was mind-boggling. God's voice is transformational; it can change churches, cities and nations. But when Jonah heard it, he ran away! He did everything he could to hide from God's call.

While fleeing to Tarshish, "Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up" (Jon. 1:4). The sailors cast lots in an attempt to find out who was responsible for the storm. When the lot fell to Jonah, they asked him who was responsible and what they should do. He said to them, "'Pick me up and throw me into the sea,' he replied, 'and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you'" (Jon. 1:12).

Jonah's choice to go against God had consequences not just for himself but for everyone on the boat.

Our world has given us many reasons to run away and hide. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage in America. Many precautions are valid and should be followed. However, we must ask ourselves if we are using COVID-19, or any excuse, to run away from obeying God's purpose for our lives. When we choose to ignore God, there are ripple effects. Our avoidance of God affects the whole boat.

Jonah tried to escape by detaching himself from God and getting as far away from Nineveh as possible.

When we try to hide from God's purpose, we typically do one of three things:

- We escape into the past.
- We escape into the future.
- We detach ourselves and try to hide.

From the depths of my heart, I feel that this is not a time to run away or blame the past, present or future. Our choice at this moment will have a significant effect on everyone around us.

We must ask this question: Has America become a wicked nation?

We are a great nation that God has used to bless the world. But that does not change the question. Has America become a wicked nation?

The only answer to wickedness is the righteous blood of the Lamb. John the Baptist proclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29b, MEV)

It is time to be honest. It is not the time to run. We must cry out to God in humility. We must pray and believe for a wave of righteousness that will heal our land and bless the world's nations.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.'" Lean into His calling; good things are on the other side.

You're beautiful. I see Jesus in you. Have a great week. {eo}

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