

P322

Grace Notes Radio Program

THEME: Jonah – It's only downhill from here

SONGS: LOVE WILL (3:40)

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. We pray you've been enjoying our study of the book of Jonah. So far, we've learned that God wanted to REACH out to the pagan Gentiles of Nineveh with His mercy, so He REVEALED a message to His prophet, Jonah, and told him to go there and preach it, but Jonah REACTED by RUNNING away. On our program today, we're going to reenact what happened as a result of Jonah's disobedience. The setting is Joppa, a seaport about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem - known today as Jaffa. A ship is docked there and about ready to leave. It's destination - Tarshish, a mining colony in Spain. Looks like a nice day for a cruise. Hey...there's Jonah boarding the boat now.

Person 1 : Ticket please.

Jonah: This boat IS headed for Tarshish, isn't it?

Person 1: Sure thing & what a beautiful day for a cruise.

Let's see....your bunk is on the lower level. There's not much of a view from there. Why did you choose it?

Jonah: I want to get as far away from God as I possibly can.

(pause - irritated) Just show me my quarters, please. I'm tired.

Person 1: Ok, follow me.

***(footsteps – 2 going down then 1 up) ** (boat horn in background)**

Person 1: Did you see that guy that just boarded?

Person 2: Yea, looks like HE'S got a story to tell.

He didn't even stick around while we set sail - went immediately to his cabin - like he wanted to hide, or sleep off whatever's bothering him.

Person 1: He told ME he's running away from his God.

Person 2: He's a strange one – got a dark look in his eye – a kind of bitterness. Wonder what happened to him?

Person 1: I don't know...but let's get busy with those sails. Looks like it might not be such a nice day after all. I see some storm clouds on the horizon.

*****wind & thunder starts)**

Person 2: (shouting) Wow! This is no natural storm. The wind is fiercer than I've ever seen it. I think the boat might break up. What are we gonna do?

Person 1: Let's throw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship and pray to the gods....Where's that strange guy we took on? Maybe he's angered his god and we're all paying for it. I'll go find him and bring him up here.

***(footsteps again – 1 set – knock on the door)**

Person 1: How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god!

Maybe HE'LL take notice of us, and we'll not perish.

Jonah: (make a annoyed sound)

*** (footsteps again – 2 sets) ***(people shouting in the background)**

Person 1: Hey everybody....

let's cast lots to find out who's responsible for this calamity.

(sound of pebbles moving around in a box)

Person 2: Looks like you drew the marked pebble Jonah...Tell us, who's responsible for making all this trouble for us? What did you do? Where do you come from? What is your country?

From what people are you?

Jonah: I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the land.

*****(wind up the wind – stronger)**

Person 2: (terrified) Gasp...It's getting worse out here.

What have you done?

What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?

Jonah: Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will become calm. I know it's my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

Person 1: We can't. You'll die for sure. We'll just keep rowing.

Maybe we can reach land.

*****(winds stronger)**

Person 2: It's no use. Let's pray to Jonah's God. Didn't he say He's the God of the sea and land?

(crying out) O Lord, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for You, O Lord, have done as You pleased.

(pause) Ok, here goes.

******* (sound of picking up jonah – toss into the sea)**

(STOP wind and thunder)

ALL: (speak in wonder) Will you look at that.

That's incredible.

He was right.

I'd have never believed it if I didn't see it with my own two eyes.

Person 1: Jonah's God must be the one true god. Let's make a vow to worship Him and build a sacrifice.

(interlude music)

Were you there? I was. This incident surely must have convinced Jonah that he couldn't hide from God. King David understood this. He wrote in Psalm 139 (7-8, 11-12)...

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the Heavens You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there...

If I say "Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to you, the night will shine like the day for darkness is as light to you. "

Yes, God was there, even in the darkest and deepest part of the boat. It's interesting to me that God didn't prevent Jonah from boarding that boat. In fact, it was conveniently waiting for him AND he had the money for the fare. But, after thinking about how God has worked in my own life, I've concluded that He allows us to do what our heart is bent on doing, without standing in the way – at least for a while. You can rest assured, though, He will respond to disobedience by eventually making circumstances oppose us – because He cares too much to let us continue doing wrong.

God had told Jonah to 'ARISE & go'. Instead, Jonah 'went down', to Joppa, then down into a ship and eventually down to the bottom of sea. His punishment was the very thing he had asked for – to be cast out of God's sight.

Jonah 1:4 says that God orchestrated the turbulent environment by sending a GREAT wind on the sea. The crew figured correctly – it was Jehovah God. They not only realized that He was in control, they saw that they needed to pray to Him – something Jonah didn't do, even after they urged him to 'ARISE & PRAY' to his god. Jonah would rather succumb to the heathen practice of appeasing the gods by offering a human sacrifice, than to submit to His Father God.

Our sin against God is rarely ever a solo event. It always affects those around us. Jonah's rebellion brought the pagan Phoenician sailors into peril. But did you notice? They were more humanitarian than Jonah. Jonah didn't want the Ninevites spared for anything, but these men tried to save Jonah's life even when theirs was in jeopardy.

The men tried their best to row out of the storm – but to no avail, because when God is set on enacting his discipline, there's nothing

anyone can do to stand in the way. So often, we try to shield our loved ones from the consequences of their sin, but if God wants a lesson learned, He ties our hands.

It's interesting to note that God worked His will even through the superstitious act of casting lots. I like how Proverbs 16:33 puts it...

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. In other words, what appears to be chance, is really part of God's sovereign plan. God can and will use whatever means He chooses to accomplish it.

He even used a disobedient Jonah to influence a shipload of pagan sailors. Jonah had confessed he worshiped Jehovah God and also admitted that he was sinning against Him. It must have been obvious to the crew that his conduct didn't match his creed. God's miraculous display of power in dealing with Jonah, caused them to proclaim Jehovah as the one true God and worship Him.

Jonah made his confession to men, but still not to God. We're like this, too, aren't we? Oh, it's so much better to go to God and repent than to keep on talking about our sin. Why carry it around with us? God's conviction may be a bit uncomfortable, but He forgives and comforts us when we confess it to Him.

Jonah will soon see that God pursues mankind because He loves us. He can't allow known sin to remain unconfessed in the lives of his children. At our lowest point, when we've gone DOWN as far as we can go, His hand will still be holding tightly on to us, ready to pull us up and set us back on track. Psalm 139:9 says...

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. In Ezekiel 34:16 God says...

I will search for the lost and bring back the strays.

Are you fleeing from God? It's only downhill from where you are. God's is reaching out to you. You've probably seen it through circumstances, friends or things you're hearing – even this program. His love will light the way for you to come home to Him. Why not do it today.

*** LOVE WILL ***

We pray you've been blessed by this program. If so, please write and tell us at..

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Join us on our next program. Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!