

Series: Seas of Grace  
C.R. 3-20-22  
“Running From God”

**Text:** Jonah 1:1-3

**Intro:** Today we start a brand-new series of messages from the book of Jonah that we have entitled “Seas of Grace”. We will see God’s dealings with a disobedient prophet, and we will see how he deals with a group of very wicked people. A people know for its hatred of all things Israel and Jewish. Jonah was a Jew of Jews. He was a nationalist for sure. He proudly wore the colors of his country and would stop at nothing to see them right with God.

This brings us to the dilemma found in Jonah. He is signed up in the service of God. He takes his orders from God to stand and speak what thus saith the Lord. He knows that like the prophets before him, at times he would have to speak a hard word to his people and he would not be popular because of it, but if it would help his country and countrymen he would do it. But God does not ask Jonah to preach to his country, but to go to another one. He is asked to go into enemy territory and tell them that God sees their sin. This is a problem for him, and we will get into why a little later.

Today we see a prophet running from God. I will not teach this book as a parable, or as allegory. I will teach this book as historical. These are events that really transpired. I think of the Apostle Paul before he was saved was totally opposed to Christ and Christianity. He thought of Jesus as imposter and his followers was crazy. As we know Paul had an encounter with Christ after his crucifixion and resurrection. He saw the resurrected Lord. Paul would write, “It is the resurrection, which gives basis to everything else”. Because of the power and miracle of the resurrection I have no problem believing that God can use a fish as a hotel for a man.

## 1) God's Command (v.1-2)

- a. This book opens with this statement “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah”.
- b. The phrase arise and go is important here. The word “arise” here indicates an immediate response is necessary.
- c. This is not “Hey Jonah if you ever happen to be passing by Nineveh, maybe you could say something for me”.
- d. God is not vague with his request. He is very specific and very explicit about it. You go, To Nineveh.
- e. Jonah is even told what his message is supposed to be when he gets there.
- f. Jonah you are to go to Nineveh and denounce the wickedness there. That is your assignment.

## 2) Jonah's Concern

- a. We can feel sure that Jonah knew about Nineveh and that he was well acquainted with the type of people this was.
- b. Apparently, it was one of the most wicked places in the then known world.
- c. In Nahum chapter 3 we can read about them. “Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims. The crack of whips, the clatter of wheels, galloping horses, and jolting chariots. Charging cavalry, flashing swords and glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead bodies without number, people stumbling over the corpses—all because of the wanton lust of a harlot, alluring the mistress of sorceries, who enslaved nations by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft.

- d. I am against you, declares the Lord Almighty. “I will lift your skirts over your face. I will show the nations your nakedness. **(Nahum 3:1-5)**
  - e. God is outraged by the people of Nineveh, so he tells his preacher go in there and denounce it.
  - f. What concern’s Jonah about that. Jonah knows that if he preaches this message, and the people are alarmed enough to repent that God will relent of his judgment and not bring disaster.
  - g. **Jeremiah 18:7.** “If at any time I announce that nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned”.
  - h. Jonah’s heart is not God’s heart here.
  - i. We should note this here and we will many times in this series. God loves to save people. He loves to extend his grace, and there is an abundance of it.
  - j. “The actions of God, in judgment and in mercy, are not constrained by our understanding of what’s taking place”.
- Begg**
- k. **Read Jonah 4: 1-2**
  - l. Jonah does not like the fact that these people may possibly be converted.

### 3) Jonah’s Choice (v.3)

- a. When we read this, we immediately question “why did he not go”? We usually read “The Lord said, and the prophet did”. What’s up here with this response.
- b. We just read it in chapter 4.
- c. It is reasonable for us to conclude that Jonah responded the way he did because he did not want Nineveh to be spared.

- d. Sure, we shake our head in agreement that the gospel is for “whosoever” but is it possible that inside of us we are quietly thinking but not for them?
- e. There is a very real thing in the church that people generally only reach out to others that are like them.
- f. We think that there is no point going to the people that are not like us, they would not come anyway.
- g. Jonah wants to preach, but he only wants to preach where he wants to preach, to whom he wants to preach to.
- h. His decision. To get as far away from this as he possibly can.
- i. He would pay the fare, and he would take the boat that was going as far the opposite direction as he could find.
- j. When people make up their mind to run from the Lord and His word, they do some strange things, go to some great lengths, and pay some high prices.
- k. Is anyone in here running today? The Lord has spoken clearly to you about how He wants it done, but you have decided to run.
- l. What do you think will be the outcome of that? Adam and Eve thought they could hide. The psalmist said Where can I go that you are not there?
- m. Remember the devil will always have a way for you to run. He may provide the ride, but you will pay the fare.

**Conclusion:** There is a lot to take in these verses. We see a prophet who decides that God’s plan is just not a plan that he approves of. He decides I am going another way. I’m running, and he has paid the fare and boarded the boat. He has pillowed his head in the bottom of the boat, thinking it will take him to a place of peace, but soon will find that running from God is a costly business.