

Series: Seas of Grace

C.R. 4-3-22

“The People’s Court”

Text: Jonah 1:8-10

Intro: As we continue our study today, we find Jonah being called to the people’s court. The lots had been cast, and the blame was squarely on Jonah. But the mariners had a few questions to ask this stranger. The minds of these sailors was reeling as they wondered what could this man have done to make his God so angry?

In a sense Jonah is put on trial. Questions like what is your occupation? Where do you come from? What group of people do you belong to? All questions that these sailors wanted to know, so they could log it down in their book of gods.

Let’s consider this today from a different angle. What if you and I were put on trial by a group of peers. Who are you? What do you believe about Christ? What do you believe about the Bible? What does your God say about this and that? If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Let’s examine Jonah on trial.

1) He is a Pitiful Witness (v8)

- a. The men on this ship may not have known the God of Jonah, but they knew that this storm was no ordinary storm.
- b. They are curious about this man who had boarded the boat. How could he be sleeping in such a storm.

- c. What had he done that had made his God so angry with him?
- d. The name Jonah means “dove”, and the dove is a symbol of peace. Jonah was a Jew, and the Jews were to bring blessing but instead he has brought trouble.
- e. In a very dark hour in these men’s lives there stands a man who has the answer, and yet he will not talk about it.
- f. “If people have to ask us if we are a Christian after being with us for some time, it is proof that we are not living as we should”.

2) He Has a Puny Confession (v.9)

- a. Note that Jonah skips over the question about his occupation.
- b. He does answer them about where he is from, and he does talk about His God.
- c. The word “fear” here means affiliation. It is a confession, but a puny one.
- d. Raising your hand in a crowd and standing alone are two different things.
- e. This was the testimony of a backslider whose sin had imperiled the lives of those who had received him in their midst in good faith. The worst kind of company a man can keep is that of a backslidden believer like Jonah. He was a source of peril to everyone. (*John Phillips*)
- f. Yes, Jonah is answering their questions, but those answers are puny at best.
- g. He sounds like a man who has made up his mind that I know God but I am not going to do what he wants. I know that he is all powerful, but...
- h. We have far too many puny confessions out there. Far too many vague answers in a world that needs truth.
- i. We have puny answers, puny sermons, puny churches, in a time when the ship is battered, and the sailors are looking for answers.

3) He is Asked a Probing Question. (v.10)

- a. If you're God is who you say he is, the one who made the sea and the dry land, then why have you done this?
- b. Why are you running?
- c. Even these pagan realized that a man must not run away from his God.
- d. Notice that verse 10 says that when Jonah told the sailors that he was running from his God, then they were exceedingly afraid.
- e. The great question in their mind is with a God like you have described to us, why would you want to run from him?
- f. **Illustration** of a man that I heard on a podcast, who once pastored but has decided that he doesn't believe it all anymore.
- g. "We can always give good reasons for running to God, but who can give a reasonable answer for running from God".
- h. Why is that people run from the best thing, to the worst things?
- i. What might have happened here if Jonah would have said men I must repent right now, and beg for my God to save us?
- j. It is likely that God would have calmed the storm, and these men would have trusted in the God of Jonah.
- k. But that is not what Jonah wanted. He knew to repent meant he would have to obey the command that was give to him.
- l. **Contrast Jonah and Paul in Acts 27: 23-25**

Conclusion: Are you running from something today? Are you away from God? Yes, you may believe in Him, but are you close to Him? There is a great deal of people that are in a storm that you have created? This is affecting more than you. Repent and Return.