

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 1/7/2024

Jonah 1

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Posted on Monday)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Highlights

- Chronologically, Jonah falls between 2 Kings 14 and 2 Kings 15.
- Jonah is the son of Amittai and grew up in Gath Hopher.
 - Gath Hopher – about 2 miles from Nazareth
 - Amittai – not a special person, just like Joseph (earthly father of Jesus)
- Jonah appears in Scripture before the book of Jonah – 2 Kings 14:25-27
 - We are all unfaithful, but God IS faithful (the expanded boundaries)
 - God will use the unfaithful (Jeroboam) to carry out HIS faithfulness
 - Many times God works in the opposite way we would expect Him to.
 - Jonah is a book of opposites.
 - **How has God shown HIS faithfulness when you have been unfaithful.**
- **Jonah 1:1-2** “Go” = Get up!
 - “has come before me” – God knew of the wickedness all along, but there comes a point He says, ‘no more.’ I’m going to move in this situation.
 - **Have you ever seen God move like this?**
 - God calls on the prophet who He has spoken through before (go back to 2 Kings 14), and says, get up. Let’s go! I’m going to work through you again!
 - Ninevah is a foreign, violent place that eventually becomes the capital of Assyria.
 - Ninevites would behead and mutilate people just for the enjoyment of it. Evil.
 - God is saying, go to those people and tell them about Me. Good luck! (But I’ll be with you!)
- **Jonah 1:3** – “ran away” = Got up and ran
 - Tarshish is in Spain, 2500 miles away. Ninevah is 550 miles, in the other direction.
 - Paid the fare – Jonah was still being a “good person” but was running from God.
 - You can run from God and do everything right.
 - **Would you rather do things your way and run or God’s way?**
 - There is always a cost we pay when we run FROM God.
 - It’s usually sanity, peace, relationships, etc. **What other costs do you incur when you run from God?**
 - When you’re running from God, peace is often difficult to find.
 - There is also a cost to be paid when you run TO God.
 - Because of our sinful nature, we cannot be in the presence of God as we are.
 - So God paid the price for us – the blood of Jesus.
- **Jonah 1:4-5** – throwing cargo overboard ruined the trip for these sailors. It is a trading ship. They exchange their cargo for the good stuff (a lot of gold) in Tarshish.
 - Deep sleep = sleep, great sleep
 - How can Jonah be at peace and fall into this deep sleep. He ran from God, the storm is breaking apart the ship, but he’s at enough peace to fall into sleep.
 - The peace he was experiencing was, whew, that whole Ninevah thing is behind me, I can breathe.
 - But that “peace” is from Satan, and won’t last; it won’t sustain you
 - **Talk about how you’ve experienced this “peace” or breathing space.**
- **Jonah 1:6** Are you asleep, while the world around you perishes?

- **Are you saying, “hey life is fine, while the world says, how can you stay in your little Christian circles and be indifferent to what is going on around you?”**
- **Jonah 1:7-8** Casting lots is not a sinful thing. God uses lots to guide his people throughout the Torah. The Holy Spirit wasn’t living inside us yet so God used lots!
- **Jonah 1:9-10** Jonah answers like a “good prophet” should. But he was actually being hypocritical.
 - Hey, I worship Yahweh, Creator of the heavens, the land and the sea.
 - He is running from God while saying He worships God.
 - **Are you running from God and saying you’re worshipping.** (i.e, are you going to Connect Group and saying everything is okay, yet running from God? Are you going to church every Sunday and look good, but you’re running from God? Are you in a Bible Study, but are running from God?)
 - Jonah is doing what God asked him to do – on a boat and with insincerity.
- **Jonah 1:11-12** Jonah says, hey I could just jump in, but why don’t you throw me.
 - It’s not the stuff of life that needs surrendered...it’s your full self.
 - The stuff in your life that you’re carrying: sin, diagnosis, addiction, worry, etc.
 - And you have to throw yourself.
 - **What have you surrendered to God instead of your whole self? What would it take for you to surrender yourself to God?**
- **Jonah 1:15** – He allowed them to throw him over. He’s still “asleep;” still indifferent.
- **Jonah 1:16** – The sailors **feared** God, **offered** to God, and **made** vows.

How do we become people who are not asleep? We become sailors (not the prophet!)

1. We must **fear** the Lord
 - a. Fear is not being afraid of God
 - b. Fear is not simply showing respect to God. He’s not your buddy. He is the almighty, powerful God.
 - c. Fear is saying, “I understand my sin brings judgement [and the judgement will hurt], but I also understand that God is just and worthy of my praise [worship].
 - i. God is not a God of vengeance
 - ii. If judgement comes, it doesn’t come haphazardly, because God is just and worthy of praise.
 - d. See Psalm 139. It describes Jonah’s life and explains fearing the Lord.
2. We must **offer** ourselves as sacrifices.
 - a. I surrender.
3. We must **make vows**.
 - a. Here is my promise to you God as we move forward together.

It’s time we wake up to the cost of running from God.

Wherever you are, God is ready to meet you there.