

September 30, 2018
RELENTLESS - Part 1

“Everyone Has a Nineveh”

God loves you so much that He is relentlessly pursuing you!

When we really grasp this truth, it will absolutely, fundamentally change our lives!

2 Kings 14:23-27 (ESV): “²³In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. ²⁴And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.... ²⁵He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. ²⁶For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, for there was none left, bond or free, and there was none to help Israel. ²⁷But the LORD had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.”

Jonah was a significant and successful prophet of his day who had demonstrated his faithfulness to the Lord by the time we get to Jonah 1.

Jonah 1:1-2 (ESV): “¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.”

Jonah 1:3 (ESV): “But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”

The Lord God had chosen Israel to be a light to the nations, to work in and through Israel to reveal Himself, but the Jews largely thought of the Lord God as just *their* God.

Christians often envision God as just being for themselves, but, as Jesus made clear, God has always had a bigger plan.

Jesus: “¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:19-20 ESV)

Jesus commanded his followers to go and “make disciples of all nations,” but are we going in some other direction?

Jonah 1:4-5 (ESV): “⁴But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.”

Jonah 1:6 (ESV): “So the captain came and said to him, ‘What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.’”

Jonah 1:7-8 (ESV): “⁷And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.’ So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, ‘Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?’”

Jonah 1:9-10 (ESV): “⁹And he said to them, ‘I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.’ ¹⁰Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, ‘What is this that you have done!’ For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.”

Jonah 1:11-13 (ESV): “¹¹Then they said to him, ‘What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?’ For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, ‘Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.’ ¹³Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them.”

The non-believing sailors turn out to be more honorable than Jonah.

Jonah 1:14-16 (ESV): “¹⁴Therefore they called out to the LORD, ‘O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.’ ¹⁵So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.”

The challenge for those of us who follow Christ is to see our lives as an instrument God wants to use to show Himself through us.

Jonah’s disobedience affected others, including those who didn’t believe in his God.

As we go on the journey as disciples of Jesus, increasingly the journey isn't as much about *not* doing the *wrong* things, as it is about *not* doing the right things, about failing to do the loving thing when we have the opportunity.

James 4:17 (ESV): "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

God is calling us to unleash His unconditional, sacrificial love into our families and schools and workplaces and communities, and becoming more like Jesus is the only way we can do that consistently and naturally.

Jonah 1:17 (ESV): "And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Jonah 2:1 (ESV): "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish"

Jonah 2:10 (ESV): "And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land."

Do we have a Nineveh in our lives, a person or place God is calling us to, to be used by Him in their lives, that we avoid, even going in the opposite direction?

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

Follow Randy on Twitter @HagemanRandy