

PURSUED: (Week One)

June 2nd, 2024

“The Pursuit of a Relentless God”

INTRODUCTION:

- God relentlessly pursues every individual with grace, mercy, and love.
- Every one of us has a tendency to run away from God’s calling and will in our life.
- What are some parallels between Jonah’s experience and our own tendency to resist God’s calling in our life?

JONAH: An OT book that is a powerful illustration of one trying to evade God’s call and the consequences of running away from His will.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. One can run from God but cannot outrun God.
2. God’s calling and our willingness to step out in faith, even in challenging circumstances.
3. God’s unwavering pursuit of His children and the invitation to surrender to His will and direction despite our shortcomings.

OVERVIEW OF JONAH’S DISOBEDIENCE:

- A. Jonah receives a clear directive from God but chooses to disobey by fleeing in the opposite direction.
- B. The dramatic events that follow Jonah’s disobedience:
 - i. Hellacious storm that endangers the lives of others.
 - ii. Being thrown into the sea.
 - iii. Being swallowed by a great fish.
 - iv. Being vomited onto the shore.
- C. Even in our disobedience, God continues to pursue us with grace and mercy.

LESSONS FROM JONAH’S ENCOUNTER WITH THE SAILORS:

- The impact of Jonah’s presence on the sailor’s lives and livelihood.
- The impact of allowing negative influences aboard “*our ship.*”
- Caution in the company we keep and the decisions we make, as they can affect not only our lives but also those around us.

WHAT’S NEXT:

- Consider areas in your life where you may be running from God.
- Spend some time in self-examination of your response to God’s calling and your willingness to step out in faith, even in challenging circumstances.
- **TODAY**, remember God’s unwavering pursuit of His children and the constant invitation for you to surrender to His will and direction in your life.
- Lastly, respond to God’s call without delaying it to a future date. God’s call to you of being a disciple and living out active faith is a call for today as we are not guaranteed tomorrow! Don’t delay!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Icebreaker: *Was there ever a time in your childhood where you ran away from home or from what appeared to be a hard circumstance?*

Read/Tell the Story: **Jonah**

1. What stood out to you the most from the sermon on the Pursuit of a Relentless God?
2. Have you ever experienced a moment where you felt like you were running from God's call in your life? How did you respond?
3. How can we cultivate a mindset of turning toward God in all aspects of our lives, rather than turning away from Him?
4. In what ways have you seen God's relentless pursuit of you or others around you? Share any personal stories or examples.
5. What steps can you take this week to align yourself more closely with God's will for your life and embrace His grace and mercy?
6. How can we support and encourage one another in our faith journeys and hold each other accountable in living as disciples of Christ?
7. Is there a specific area in your life where you feel called to take a step back toward God today? How can we pray for you and support you in that decision?

Closing Prayer: *Dear God, we thank you for your relentless pursuit of us and your unwavering love and grace. Help us to turn toward you in all areas of our lives and seek your will above all else. Grant us the strength and courage to follow you wholeheartedly and live as passionate disciples of Christ. May we support and uplift one another in our faith journeys and be a reflection of your love to the world around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.*