

Rev. Lex DeLong / General

Major Posts from Minor Prophets: Be an Influencer / Jonah / Jonah

God's compassion frees the child of God from the most entrenched hypocrisy.

Notes

02/12 "Hypocrisy's Hoodoo" Subtitle: The Nature of True Compassion, Scripture: Psalm 147:1-6

Major Posts from the Minor Prophets:

- **Hosea**: God is God of 2nd chances — It's never too late.
- **Joel**: God is God of unstoppable Grace — It's never too much
- **Amos**: God is God of Restoration — It's never lost
- **Obadiah**: God is Your God — It's never not for you
- **Jonah**: God is Your Salvation — It's never not available

Remember, the book of Jonah clearly presents a sovereign God who directs the forces of nature and men's will to accomplish His purpose of showing compassion to undeserving sinful people. It clearly paints the picture of how futile resistance is to His will and the inevitable accomplishment of it. Its open-ended resolution leaves its readers with a simple rhetorical question they must answer for themselves, "Will I love with compassion like God or not?" A second question begs to be asked by its readers as well and that is, "As a child of God, do I even have a choice?"

Hypocrisy is powerfully addictive. Hypocrisy can cast its spell, its Hoodoo, over the most unsuspecting victim. We all face its temptation in our insecurities. We want to be thought well of by those we hold in high esteem.

One of the reasons why social media is so dominant in our culture is that we deeply yearn for others to “think” highly of us. Posting is often a way for us to express what we want others to think of us: wise, pretty, strong, courageous, committed - the list goes on.

The problem is, we know our true selves, we know our insecurities, and the last thing we want is for those we hold in high regard to know those things about us, so we find ways to hide those deficiencies or distract attention from them. In doing so, we set aside our integrity to a point, and represent ourselves in public as something we know deep down we are not.

So, we strive hard to convince others (and even ourselves) that we are much more than we know ourselves to truly be deep down. This creates an over-inflated view of ourselves that leads to pride in both our actions and our self-image. You see, pride is not intense confidence in one’s self, pride is a response or self-defense, to deflect ourselves and others from what or who we fear we truly are. That response or self-defensive action is hypocrisy. In doing so, we not only misrepresent who we are, but we wrongfully judge the value of another and their opinion, based on who we think they are. Most of the time, we truly do not know the real them either. Hypocrisy is ripe with giving to and receiving from others, the wrong impression.

Here’s the problem, we are all as equally insecure about ourselves as everyone else. And frankly, who wants to be thought of badly by those who are around us? So, we respond in kind, hide the true us, project the image we want others to think, double down on that image when challenged or are reminded of our fears, and pridefully respond in self-defense. It is a bewitching Hoodoo that governs increasing portions of people’s lives and actions.

But the Apostle Paul warns us in Romans 12:3

Romans 12:3 NASB

³ For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

In this warning, Paul also gives a reminder, a more realistic self-image of ourselves as a child of God. That reminder is that it is God who allots to us, in this verse our "measure of Faith," but in other places like Ps. 139, He allots or forms our entire being, and the entire being of those around us. The question remains, "How do we then avoid the temptation of hypocrisy so that we can see ourselves as and be outwardly, without fear, the person that God has made us be?"

Through this prophecy of Job, God gives us a glimpse into the most powerful tool He provides all mankind, to overcome our bent towards hypocrisy. Aristotle coined the phrase, "Nature abhors a vacuum." When something is taken away, nature rushes to fill the spot. The opposite action is true as well, whenever something is added to that which is at capacity, something else that is already there will be pushed out by pressure to make room.

The book of Jonah demonstrates that God's compassion for all people is the most powerful thing a child of God can add to themselves to push out pride and hypocrisy and avoid their temptation.

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1. Missing Compassion Comes at a Cost (Jonah 1:1-10)
2. Compassion Redirects Focus (Jonah 1:11-2:10)

3. True Compassion Knows No Hypocrisy (Jonah 3:1-4:3)

As a child of God, we must set aside our view of who we are.

As a child of God, we must set aside our view of who others are.

As a child of God, we must set our eyes on who God is and what He has made us all.

If we look at ourselves and others as those who God has specifically made for His purpose, we are less apt to surrender to the temptation of hypocrisy and more likely to show compassion to those with whom God has called us.

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