

God Will Pursue

Scripture

"But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that [was] in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish." And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble [has come] upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause [is] this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" So 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]." Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them." (Jonah 1:4-10 NKJV)

Commentary

There are at least three things to learn from Jonah's flight. 1. When we run away from God, God will respond. 2. God knows how to get our attention. 3. God has limitless resources He needs to correct our waywardness. Jonah ran as far as he could away from Nineveh but God knew how to bring him back.

It is actually a blessing to know that God will peruse us when we run away from Him. It might not be pleasant, but the alternative is much worse. As it is written, "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?" (Hebrews 12:7 NKJV) If you can walk in sin without God's chastening then your soul is in danger. He will not allow us to sin without consequences, and should you allow sin to sear your conscience how will you discern the difference between un-mortified sin and a lack of regeneration?

One's conscience would need to be very dull indeed not to notice the chastening of the Lord for He knows how to get our attention. God's first prodding is often a lack of joy which creates a longing for Him. Thankfully, this does the job in most cases. However, Jonah had gone beyond this stage to outright rebellion. He refused to go to Nineveh. This was not a mistake in reading the Lord's will because Jonah had the Word of the Lord come to him and clearly direct him.

God's response was sufficient to let Jonah know that He was not going to take no for an answer. The tempest arose and began to wreck the ship in which Jonah was hiding. Have you ever noticed your world coming apart? It could be that God is trying to get your attention. If you are harboring sin, and it comes to mind in response to your troubles, it is likely God's chastening. Trouble is not always chastening, however, if your conscience is being pricked you better listen. To ignore this can lead to even more difficult times. As it is written, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads (Acts 9:5b)." Goads are sharp points placed behind the legs of oxen to keep them from kicking. Continuing to resist God brings more and more pain.

Also, don't think God can't get the job done. If He can control the seas and the wind, He can bring a tempest into your life also. His plans will be brought to fruition.

Why test Him? Jonah went through a terrible storm, and cost the crew of that ship their cargo. Refusing to obey the Lord will cost you, too, and maybe those dear to you. Don't kick against the goads—obey the Lord always.