

The NOW Word for You! You Can Run, But You Can't Hide..Why Would You?

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Jonah 1:1 – "NOW the Word of the LORD came to Jonah.."

First, is the word "now" which denotes a sense of urgency, or immediacy. When God speaks a Word, it's for the present and requires that we take action NOW, without delay, in as timely a manner as possible. **He's saying don't put it off.**

"The word (Word) of the LORD.." – Try this one on for size. God is speaking directly to Jonah as He speaks to ALL of HIS children..that's us. Please note: GOD does not 'request' or 'ask' us to do something, He 'commands' it. He 'directs' us. He 'instructs' us, but does NOT ask us. In other words, when God says something, He's expecting a response, and the response that He expects is OBEDIENCE.

Then, look and see whom that NOW Word of the LORD was directed at. It was Jonah!

The Word from the LORD was a Word for JONAH and NO ONE ELSE. And why? Because Jonah was one of God's prophets, it was his station, it was his duty, it was his responsibility, to not only Hear from God, But TO ACT ON THAT WORD AND OBEY IT! NO DEBATE, NO ARGUMENT, just OBEDIENCE!

How many times has God told you to do something and you wasted time arguing about it? How do you know if it's God talking to you or not? Then, how should we respond to that Word from God?

Let's start by answering the second question, first. How do you know if you sense or 'hear' in your heart or spirit whether God is speaking to you or not? The answer is simple, you have to 'know Him' and 'know His Word'. And, the only way to do that is through Jesus Christ, the Living Word, with the help of the Holy Spirit who will train you and teach you how to recognize God's voice and discern if it's Him or not. And, one of the ways we do that is by "knowing" His written Word.

Could we agree that you can't become a great auto mechanic without first understanding the basic principles of how an engine is supposed to work, in order for you to understand basic stuff like, why you can't just pour motor oil into the gas tank or pour antifreeze into your brake fluid reservoir. I think we could all agree that it would be absolutely ludicrous for someone to argue, "Well, it's all going to the same place isn't it? It's an engine, who cares how it gets there?"

I know, I know, that's a ridiculous example, right? But, is it? There are a lot of people who tend to believe that they'll get to heaven in much the same way, saying all sorts of things like, "Well, I don't see why I need to believe in Jesus Christ to get to heaven? After all, if God is a loving God, then it shouldn't matter should it?"

Or, one of the most popular, "People just need to be good to others, tolerant of others, loving other people, and treat others with kindness, then you'll get to heaven." And then, there are those who just live for the "hear and now" and don't believe in an "after life".

You get the picture? As true Christians, we recognize not only the lie of those things, but also the foolishness and destructive end of those beliefs. And yet, I'm sure that there are people in church who fall into those 'traps of deception'. They start to believe the 'little things' that take them off course, then those little things take them so far off course, that they not only drift away, but begin to loose themselves from the Truth. When that happens, rifts begin to form in relationships with friends and loved ones who really care about them, and more importantly, they begin a self-separation from God and His destiny and purpose for their lives.

They get so into themselves and their own "picture(s)" of how God does or doesn't do things, or how He should or shouldn't do them, that they forget the one simple fact, and that is, GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING! And, most surprisingly of all, to so many, GOD actually knows HOW He wants something done AND WHO He wants to use to accomplish that task!

And, that's where we find Jonah!

To begin with, remember, Jonah was a prophet of God. (**II Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1, 9**)

It was his place and his privilege to Hear from God, as well being able to Talk with God. Please notice that I said, "Talk *with God*", not "*talk to* God", which is what we see Jonah doing. Speaking with someone involves both listening to the other person and sharing with the other person. Speaking "to" someone is merely a one-sided, self-centered act and a lousy attempt at communication. (**Jonah 4:2—3, 8-9**)

The second thing about Jonah that we know is that he really did understand and know of God's grace and willingness to forgive and bless. (**Jonah 4:2**)

And finally, for the sake of brevity, we also know that Jonah did not want to obey God because it involved ministering to sworn enemies of Israel. He didn't want the Ninevites saved. He wanted them destroyed.

And, think about this, it may not only have been because it was the Ninevites in and of themselves, but could it be that Jonah believed that God's Word was meant for the Hebrews only, and should not be shared with anyone other than the children of Israel?

And, if God's Word was to be shared, could it be that He also meant to share every other part of Himself and His nature with them as well? How unthinkable it must have seemed to Jonah to share God's grace, mercy, love and forgiveness, with those whom he absolutely and undeniably despised and hated.

Wow! Sort of makes us think about our own lives and how we act or respond to others around us, especially those whom we think of as most 'unlovable' or 'undeserving' of any kind of compassion, let alone grace and forgiveness.

And yet, so often is the case, isn't it? God will speak to us to pray for others. Okay, I can do that, if I 'have to'! But, then we add, "just don't ask me to go talk with *'those people'* or *'that person'*". And, what does God do, directs us to do exactly that, with exactly *that person* or *those people*. And, He expects us to do it with a loving heart and compassionate spirit. Oh yes, and it wouldn't hurt one bit if we at least 'smiled' while were doing the 'thing' and doing it 'joyfully'.

You see, Jonah was the right person, or the right fuel or tool, that was needed to touch the lives of the Ninevites, as was the entire crew of the boat he was on that was on its' way to Tarshish. And, God used Jonah mightily despite his 'shortcomings', which included a very nasty, very bitter, angry attitude. There was no love or compassion in Jonah's heart for the people of Nineveh.

The Apostle Paul says it this way in **II Corinthians 9:7 (Amplified)** – **"let each one (give) as he has made up his own mind *and* purposed in his heart, not reluctantly *or* sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, 'prompt to do it') giver (whose heart is in his giving)."**

Each one of us has a purpose or destiny in our lives, preordained by God, but yet, left to us to fulfill that purpose and walk in that destiny. So, the question is, "What are you going to do about it?" (**Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:5**)