

Mt. Lebanon Church

Adult Sunday School Lesson

10.27.2024

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Below please find my sharable thoughts, so please allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you that he would have you to see through the study of God's word to share.

Jonah Runs and Is Found Out

Jonah 1: 7 – 17

We may not always want to accept the things that happen in our life but rest assured that God knows all things in advance, and he has prepared us for anything that comes our way, even those things which we bring upon ourselves through disobedience. As believers we must not try to follow Christ at a distance, but we do so because of self-preservation, which is a worldly characteristic, and one that is hard to overcome in our life. For this reason, many people do not want to get too far away from God, but they also want to keep what they believe to be a safe distance from God, wanting to live their own lives in the world while still having the feeling of being protected from the consequences of sin.

Matthew 16: 25,....for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it....

Those who have chosen to follow Christ must willingly die to every part of their own worldly identity and agenda. Mankind tries to find comfort, joy, happiness, and a trouble-free life all in the name of self-preservation without ever realizing that the things that they believe that they are accomplishing in their life comes at the expense of their eternal life with God. Whatever the old self gains in this life will result in loss in the next. The one who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose, is a reward that comes from dying to oneself and living for Christ. The loyalty that Christ seeks from us as believers is no less than the same loyalty that he gave for us, so that we might willingly choose to become a part of his family, and that loyalty was his willingness to give up everything, even unto to point of death.

Colossians 3: 1 – 3,....if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above....set your affections on things above....for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ....

When God looks at us as believers, he no longer sees the old self, for the old self is hidden with Christ in God, therefore, he only sees the righteousness of his Son Christ Jesus in our lives. God, therefore, no longer counts our sin against us, because our identity is now covered by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jonah 1: 7 – 10,....they said....let us cast lots, that we may know....whose cause this evil is upon us....tell us....for whose cause this evil is upon ushe said.... I fear the Lord....then were the men exceedingly afraid....for the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord....

As believers, we are no different than Jonah when it comes to following Gods instructions in our life, for it is worldly fear that distracts us, and keeps us from his will. But because of his mercy and his grace, God loves us too much to allow us to go our own way, and just the same, he loves the world too much not to give them a warning of his wrath and condemnation that is to come to them because of their disobedience. Therefore, God uses our weaknesses to show unto us the foolishness of running from him when we should be running toward him in our service to preach and to teach the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ to all mankind.

When God calls us to do something, we must remember that his plan will never take us where his presence will not sustain us. So, why do we run from the presence of the Lord, we might come up with all kinds of reasons why, but the truth is that we are not willing to make a change in our life and become obedient unto God and his word.

Psalms 139: 7,....whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whether shall I flee from thy presence....

There are many times in our life that we might want to escape from the wisdom and knowledge of the commandments and promises of God word. But like David, we will never find a place to hide from God, for he is always present in our lives no matter how far we might run. If we would only realize, as believers, that obedience unto God is a comfort not a hinderance. Remember this promise:

Matthew 28: 18 – 20,....Jesus....spake....saying....all power is given unto me in heaven and earth....go ye therefore....teach all nations....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded....lo, I am with you always....

As believers, we have an obligation unto God, a service to represent his Son Christ and the saving grace that he so freely offers unto all mankind. This is a lifetime commitment, and it is obedience unto the truth of Gods word that is the standard of practice to all who will believe. Now, this is not the entirety of the process, for our commitment unto God also includes teaching and training when it comes to matters of our faith and trust in God, which helps us to define his mission for us here on earth as his representatives.

Ephesians 4: 11 – 13,.....he gave....(many positions) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ....till we all come in the unity of faith....

God had a purpose for sending Jonah to Nineva, and that purpose stands true unto us as believers today. We are to equip one another to serve in obedience to the truth of Gods word, so that we might use our God given abilities to build up the body of believers, first of all in the spirit and in the truth of the wisdom and the knowledge of Gods word, so that secondly we might have the ability to help in seeing souls won into the body of Christ. For this reason, wisdom, knowledge, and Godly understanding is an important part of an effective service unto Christ, for without it we would only find ourselves running from the presence of God.

Jonah 1: 11 – 17,....then said they....what shall we do unto thee....he said....cast me forth unto the sea....for I know that for my sake this great temptest is upon you....nevertheless....was this tempestuous against thee....wherefore they cried unto the Lord....thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee....they took up Jonah....cast him....into the sea....the sea ceased....raging....then the men feared the lord....and made vows....now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah....

Running from the presence of God means that we will suffer the consequences of our disobedience, but the suffering will be in vain if there is no understanding of the cause. Therefore, God provides many means of getting our full attention, which are not merely means of punishment, but they are also means of rescuing us by drawing us closer unto him in repentance.

Disobedience might damage our relationship with God, but it does not change who we are as being a part of the family of God. Therefore, we must never forget that no one can outrun the presence of God, and for this reason discipline will come into our lives, and with discipline comes an opportunity to learn.

Hebrews 12: 11,....no chastening for the present seemeth to ne joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby....

As believers, we should not look at unpleasant experiences as being abandoned by God, for God will use these times of hardships to guide us away from worldly sinfulness, which gives unto us an opportunity for spiritual growth into a deeper faith in him. Yes, while in the midst of our struggles, we might only see how unpleasant the situation is, but afterwards we can see how that God uses discipline as an experience unto spiritual growth.

Proverbs 3: 11,....despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction....

God disciplines us for our good, and for his glory. It is not punishment, but he disciplines so that we might learn to identify the actions and attitudes in our lives that displeases God, and hinders our spiritual growth. Discipline is how that God effectively molds us into the person that he would have us to be.

Let us Pray.

If anyone has any questions, comments or would just like to discuss any of the scriptures, feel free to call, text or email me. Keep praying for each other and all the God lays upon your heart. Hope to see everyone soon. God Bless.

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