Jonah 1:1-10

Unfinished business does not go away. The thing you run from always comes back. It always does. It returns again and again and again. Ignoring the leaky kitchen faucet doesn't make the leak go away. The ostrich that sticks its head in the sand doesn't avoid the lion that is in the brush. Things that should be confronted, things that must be taken care of eventually must be taken care of. If your account is overdrawn, money must be put into that account. It cannot be avoided if you wish to keep the account.

Unfinished business with God is the same. It doesn't matter who you are or the things you must do; the lessons God would have us learn will be learned, now or later. It is our choice, and it is always our choice when we choose to learn the lesson. What would our lives be like if God were not a God of second chances?

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So, he paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was

fast asleep.

Jonah, like us, thought he could get out of doing what God instructed him to do. He wanted to avoid the instructions of God, the calling of God. Like Jonah, sometimes we think if we just ignore something serious in our lives, it will go away. Jonah thought if he went to sleep, he could avoid God. “I’m sleeping, Lord, I don’t know what’s going on” The same thing that was going on before you laid down. The lights that were off when you laid down are still off. Jonah is playing dumb. You can’t run away from problems. You can’t avoid conflicts, and you can’t avoid them forever. They fester. They poison the body, the family, and the organization; they poison you. What Jonah was doing was affecting the entire ship, the entire crew. Sometimes those who are infected have to find out what the problem is or where it is coming from. **6 So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.” 7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So, they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.**

So, they interrogated him: “Tell us, why has this trouble come upon us? What’s your occupation? Where’d you come from? What’s your home country? What’s your nationality?” 9 “I’m a Hebrew,” he replied, “and I’m afraid of the LORD God of heaven, who made the sea—along with the dry land! 10 In mounting terror, the men asked him, “What have you done?” The men were aware that he was fleeing from the LORD because he had admitted this to them.” Sometimes people must act on their own behalf and do what is in their best interest.

When people are running from something, when people are trying to avoid something, the only person they are thinking about is themselves. Jonah was no exception. Jonah did not accept responsibility until he was called out and singled out. Jonah immediately knew the problem was him. Jonah was now backed into a corner. Jonah was being forced to realize you cannot run from God. You can ignore God, but sooner or later, you must, and you will deal with God.

Those who know the story of Jonah know that they threw Jonah overboard, and the sea became calm. The sailors on the ship were spared. Jonah was swallowed by a whale and rescued by God. Jonah is a story about unfinished business that gets finished because God gives second chances upon our repentance. In the final analysis, repentance is all about second chances. Repentance is all about a change of mind and a change of heart. It is about God watching a wayward soul go astray, and the lessons of life and living bring them back again. It is a man or woman, boy or girl accepting the second chance and finishing the unfinished business.

The God we serve is the God of second chances. The God who welcomes the discarded and the lost. The God who says yes when everything in our life has said no. The God who saves and restores to the uttermost.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool