



Leading People into a Growing  
Relationship with Jesus Christ!

**Antioch CELEBRATION Message:** "Playing Hide and Seek with God"

**Sermon Series:** Jonah

**Dates:** May 20-21, 2017

## Start the Conversation

Describe a time when you ran from something or someone that did not turn out well.

## LEARN / live / love / lead

**Read Jonah 1 (NLT)** – The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are." But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish. (1-3)

But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. So the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted. "Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives." Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. (4-7)

"Why has this awful storm come down on us?" they demanded. "Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?" Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord. "Oh, why did you do it?" they groaned. And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?" (8-11)

"Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault." Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn't make it. Then they cried out to the Lord, Jonah's God. "O Lord," they pleaded, "don't make us die for this man's sin. And don't hold us responsible for his death. O Lord, you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons." Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! The sailors were awestruck by the Lord's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him. Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights. (12-17)

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God will even sometimes increase the consequences and the pain,  
not to pay you back, *but to bring you back.* **Andy Stanley**

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## learn / LIVE / love / lead

Why do we run from God?

- 1) We run because we don't believe God our Father knows best.
  - Do you believe that Jesus can take better care of you than you can take care of yourself?
  - How are you going to turn the care of your life over to Jesus?
  - How are you going to turn the control of your will over to Jesus?
- 2) We run because we don't really know God.
  - People in our lives can illuminate God's character or obscure and diminish it.
  - Describe your mental image of God—is it similar to someone influential in your life?

## learn / live / LOVE / lead

When we run from God:

- 1) We usually run to stupid places.
- 2) Our life usually falls apart.
- 3) We always hurt the people who are close to us.

Are any or all of those true of a season in your life? How does Andy Stanley's statement relate to your life?

How can you choose GOOD consequences to come out of your life for the benefit of those closest to you?

Jesus was negatively impacted by your choices. But he still chose to come close to you and forgive. How can you offer Jesus' forgiveness to others that have had a negative impact on your life?

## learn / live / love / LEAD

True leadership includes USING your story to impact others. Consider Adam's story. Consider Abraham's story. Consider Joseph, David, Peter, Paul, Timothy, John... The list goes on and on of imperfect people with broken pasts that God used for great good! God wants to use your story! Take the opportunity this week to share with someone how Jesus positively impacts your life!

### *Pray!*

God, through Jesus, has offered to accept you—freely, totally, completely. Have you surrendered? If so, take a moment to thank him! If not, you have the opportunity to accept the best gift in the world!