

God's Sovereign Grace to Resistant People

Jonah 1:4-16

July 23, 2023

"As Jonah talked, the sailors realized that he was running away from the LORD" (see Jonah 1:10).

1. With God it is always **personal**
2. Jonah's hiding and on the run but God will not let him **go**
 - Moses is in the desert (Exodus 3:1)
 - Gideon is hiding in a wine press (Judges 6:11)
 - David is with the sheep (1 Samuel 16:11)
3. You never know what hangs in the balance of your obedience
4. Without revelation from God, your best efforts are **futile**
5. They all were under **judgment**, Jonah and sailors alike
 - The sailors fear the **storm**, but obey the LORD (16)
 - Jonah fears the LORD (9), but doesn't **obey** Him
6. God's **wrath** is turned aside when Jonah is handed over (see also Acts 2:22-24)

²² *"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*

"Those Who Persecuted Me Became My Ministry"

Today, the Lord is using Amer (21 years old) mightily at a local church in the Middle East. But Amer faces a strong challenge: the church he attends is filled with Muslim-background believers. And *they* are evangelizing to their neighbors, who are radical Muslims a part of the very group that kidnapped Amer a few years before. Amer is surrounded by those who once persecuted him.

He could move churches. He could refuse to forgive. He could even retaliate in anger. But in his zeal for the Lord, Amer recognizes God's zeal for the lost.

Though, at times, it feels impossible, Amer is now evangelizing to the radicals alongside his church. Recently, he went to his pastor weeping, "I CAN'T love them. I can't see them in OUR church. I tried, but I can't do it. I am sorry!" But with the help and prayers of the church's leadership, the Lord changed Amer's heart.

Today, Amer spends the majority of his time with the very people who once afflicted him. Today, the joy of his life is seeing their lives being changed by the Lord.

Amer was transformed by the grace of God to love and serve those whom our Lord loved and died for. Through his story, we see how our momentary, painful experiences with others vanish because of our eternal experience of Christ.

I pray that all of us see those who hurt us through the experience of Christ on the cross, not our own experience. Through Him, we can change the world. For we know that with God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

(to read the entire prayer letter click the link below or copy and paste this in your Google or other search engine)

<https://mailchi.mp/3a107075b594/update-from-the-field-relief-efforts-12616694?e=90a54d51ff>