

Transforming Daily
“ . . . from the presence of the Lord . . . ”
Jonah 1:3

The storyline of the book of Jonah is about God’s grace and mercy. There are at least three specific parties targeted here, four if the reader includes himself or herself. The first party targeted by God’s love is Jonah. God instructs Jonah to carry out His plan and of course Jonah runs from the presence of the Lord. The second Party is Israel who has been running from the presence of the Lord (except for a remnant) practically their whole existence. God’s message from Jonah indirectly to Israel is one of love, grace, mercy, justice, righteousness, and judgment. All of which Israel had already experienced and was going to experience in a permanent way in about fifty to seventy years from the time of Jonah’s writing (722 B.C. was the fall of the Northern kingdom of Israel). The third party involved was Nineveh. God’s specific commission for Jonah was to go to Nineveh and preach the “gospel.” Of course Jonah rebelled against God’s will, way, Word, and work and that’s the drama that unfolds in his book.

The fourth targeted group of Jonah that I earlier mentioned is you and me. We’re the readers of this fine book, and there are so many points of application that time would fail us to discuss all of them. However, I would like to mention a few. One point of application would be for the reader to develop a discipline to hear God’s Word, and then listen to it. It wasn’t that Jonah didn’t hear God’s Word, it was that he didn’t want to listen and do God’s Word. I confess that I have the same propensity from time to time. I don’t know any believer who doesn’t. Another point of application is to practice waiting on the Lord that way there will be less running from Him. A third application would be to rest in the sovereignty of God. God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent (look up the definition of these words if you have to). There is nothing God can’t do, doesn’t know, or a place He isn’t all at the same time. Where are you going to run and hide? Another point of application is for the believer to realize that he or she is a witness on behalf of God, and then positively use that witness in the lives of others. One more application to mention here and that is to accept God’s will for your life and that for the lives of others without whining, complaining, begrudging, envying, being jealous, or being bitter. Try not to develop an attitude of looking back and regretting the past.

Do you hear God speak to you when you read His Word? Do you listen to His Word and obediently follow His instructions? Have you accepted the love of God in and for your life? Do you love yourself the way God loves you? Do you love others the way God loves them? Are you willingly and actively sharing your faith with others irrespective of race, religion, age, gender, or socio/politico/economic background? Is there something in your life that has you running away from the presence of the Lord?