Storytime

Part 12 – How Much Proof is Enough?
Matthew 12:38-42; Jonah 1-2

The HYPOCRITICAL request — Matthew 12:38-42

Matthew has 12 previous OCCURRENCES of Jesus' miracles

Jesus denied their request, with one exception – story of JONAH

Jesus' rebuke: NINEVEH and Queen of SHEBA

Jonah and the GREAT FISH — Jonah 1-2

Jonah's issues: RESENTMENT and PERSONAL COMFORT

Running from God is always a DOWNWARD journey

Running CARRIES you further than you intend to go

Running HOLDS you longer than you intend to stay

Running COSTS you more than you intend to pay

God's PLAN and God's PRESENCE are inseparable — vs. 3

Running positions people to FIGHT against God — vs. 4-5

God's unique ATTENTION getter — 1:17, 2:10

How much PROOF is enough for you to follow Jesus 100%?

Beyond His MIRACLES, His DEATH, BURIAL,
and RESURRECTION, Jesus has no options

Auburn Grace Community Church – August 20th, 2023

Life Group Discussion Questions – August 20, 2023

Matthew 12:38-40 *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

DISCOVER (Read Matthew 12:38-42 and Jonah 1 and 2)
1. How much proof was enough for you to believe? Or would you say proof wasn't a big part of you coming to the Lord?
2. Have you ever run from God? How did that go? Does anyone want to summarize their faith story including a period where you ran from God?
3. Jonah desperately tried to flee the presence of the Lord. Can we flee from the plan of God and stay in the presence of God? Explain. What happens in our relationship with God when we run from Him? What brings us back into fellowship with God?

EXPLORE
1. In Matthew 12:38, why do you think the scribes and Pharisees wanted to see a sign when Jesus had already performed many miracles? How would you characterize the response of Jesus on a scale from very gentle to very blunt? When have you been given a stern negative response from God to a prayer? What did you learn from the response?
2. What are some examples from scripture where people battled the Lord and lost? Read Genesis 32:24-32. What was the physical impact on Jacob after wrestling with God? How can it be good to have a painful reminder of our failed battles with God? Are there any examples in scripture when people battled the Lord and won? What should we learn from God's winning percentage? Then why do we fall back into old battles?
3. Jonah kept heading south, literally. How do we sometimes run from what God wants us to do? When we ask for signs, we may think the response will be pleasant. Are signs from God always pleasant? Were the signs given to Jonah easy to handle? Jonah fell asleep in the middle of the storm. If he was at peace while running from God, then what might that tell us about the heart of Jonah? How do people in the midst of sin sometimes justify their path to destruction?

EXPERIENCE
1. What can be the consequences when we run from the Lord? Have you had periods of life when you were on a downward journey? Who or what turned you around? What are some of the organizations that help turn people around?
2. What signs could be greater than the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus? Then why do non-believers and sometimes we keep looking for signs?
3. What has God done to show you His way is the best way?

PRAY
Pray… Father God, we may not run from you in the same manner as Jonah, but all of us sin and fall short of Your glory. All too often, we make big or little choices that are the moral equivalent of veering off the path that You have chosen for us. We don't want to endure harsh correction, yet we know that You discipline those You love. With a bit of apprehension, we ask You to guide us in the way everlasting. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.
Appy… Is there an area of your life where you are not fully following Jesus? Do you agree that God's way is best? Resolve to let go of your way and let God lead you in the righteous way.