

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What Israelite woman aided the people by killing the Canaanite captain Sisera in her tent?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Gehazi - 2 Kings 4:25-26

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Jonah, The Rebellious Prophet

Rick Shamas

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Ninevah, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah arose 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 from the presence of the Lord. (Jonah 1:1-3)

Consider Jonah's actions. First, his was an act of rebellion, a decision made to disobey God. God gave commandment, but Jonah decided, "I am not going to do that." Why would a man do such a thing? Simply because he did not want to. There may be many reasons why he did not want to, but it is still an act of pure rebellion, regardless of the reasons. God's children offer many "reasons" for disobeying God's commandments concerning everything from giving to attendance to forgiveness, kindness, mercy, teaching sound doctrine or anything else that he has commanded and need to

recognize that each time we disobey it is but an act of rebellion.

Secondly, Jonah decides to “flee ... from the presence of the Lord.” I do not think that Jonah thought that he could run to a place where God could not find him. He knew the God whom he served and that there was no place where one could hide (Psalm 139:7). Jonah was making plain his intentions to disobey, not just by not going, but by going in the other direction. He was attempting to distance himself not from the knowledge of God, but from the presence of God. In effect he was telling God to leave him alone, he did not want to do it.

Many today want to distance themselves from the presence of God, at least for a time. They entertain themselves with the vilest trash the world has to offer, hour after hour of lying, cheating, drunkenness, hatred, filthy speech, immodesty and on and on, and all the while convince themselves that God does not see what they are seeing or know what they are thinking because of it. They let anger with their brother continue until it becomes wrath, and wrath, malice and bitterness, until their minds are full of ill wishes and evil surmisings, and think that they can keep such things hidden from God. Yet often when they have lost the love, hope, peace and joy of serving God they then ask, Where has God gone? And Why is He so distant, so silent? As Jonah found out, God is not the one who moved, very near and always speaking. The question is, “Why won’t you listen?”

And what is Jonah’s problem? Why this great desire to be distant from God. The answer simply is that Jonah’s will was not the same as God’s. After God’s chastisement Jonah decides to go and obey, but he does so out of fear for the consequences, not out of the love of the people of

Nineveh. It was this that he need to learn and that God attempted to teach him. (Read Jonah 4:1–11) I am often asked by people who want me to skip services on Sunday and join in their activities if I thought that, “God would put me in hell for missing just one Sunday assembly?” It is simply not an issue with me whether he would or not. I do not attend services so that God won’t “put me in hell.” I attend so that I can be edified together with the saints as we join in prayer, study, song and worship to God. Neither do I teach others the word because “it is commanded,” and I fear hell if I don’t, but because I care for the souls of others.

It was God’s desire that the people of Nineveh would repent at the preaching of the truth and be spared. That was Jonah’s fear. God wanted to save them, Jonah wanted to see them destroyed, for when they indeed repented at the preaching of Jonah and were spared, he said to God, “Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents for doing harm. Like many today, Jonah needed to know that salvation is of God, and He will save who He will. Like Jonah, we need to take upon ourselves the cause of Christ. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (John 19:1) Let us truly see our disobedience as the acts of rebellion that they are and strive rather to truly, “put on Christ,” in both attitude and action.

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