

God's Calling Requirements Part 59

From the life of Jonah Part 1

The prophet Jonah was an attested prophet of the Lord, and according to His Word Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel restored the coast of Israel, as we can read here: ***"He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher."*** (2 Kings 14:25 KJV) Sure Jonah was elated when what he had prophesied come true and confirmed that he truly received the Word of God and sure he was happy that Israel restored back what was lost. *In the same way, every one of us when what we say come true from God's Word and some one else will achieve that we are glad because it confirm to us that we are walking with God and we are hearing from God, as well as we are happy when we, the people of God, His church will be restored back what we have lost.*

** Also what we learn here is that we need to endeavour to say the very things of God knowing that God will do what He said, and nothing will happen of the things that He did not say. Therefore, the more we need to be aware of what we are speaking and declaring.*

The mission of Jonah as a prophet did not end up in such prophecy and victory of Israel in restoring back what they had lost, but God called him further to do another task that also was tender and serious matter in the sight of God. The Lord called Jonah to do this task as we can read:

"1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." (Jonah 1:1-2 KJV) God asked Jonah to go and travel to Nineveh to preach to them and to declare to them the Word of God and condemn their sins and wickedness. *In the same way, the mission of the church will not end up when we are cheered with victories and when we restored back what was lost from us but to continue to do further missions that are in the heart of God and in His mind.*

"3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD." (Jonah 1:3 KJV) *Jonah here was so careless and irresponsible about the new mission of God and what He asked him to do and rose up and flee unto Tarshish opposite of the direction that God had sent him, like many Christians workers and disciples are doing and behaving toward what God is asking them to do for Him, and you find them moving into the opposite direction of the calling of God.* The Word of God declares that Jonah ***went down to Joppa;*** and that mean he went down from the standard that God would expect him to be in. *When you disobey God and move away from the mission that God wants you to do and the standard of ministry that you are called to do then you are deteriorating and moving away from fulfilling the call of God in your life.*

Jonah had money to pay the fare of the ship to run away from God. *The same of many Christian workers, because they have money in their hands you find them spending and*

moving in the wrong direction that God wanted them to move. But God will not be silent to face such unfaithfulness toward Him. God allowed a great wind into the sea to oppose that trip of Jonah. ***"4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken."*** (Jonah 1:4 KJV) *God allow trials and hardship that in effect as great wind to oppose those Christian workers whom after they receive the blessings of God they will go away from God and from His calling, spending the blessings to enjoy their own life and doing their own will and escape suffering. God will continue to do such in targeting such opportunistic actions of such workers against God who love to be famous but refuse the mission of God.*

Why would Jonah refuse to go to Nineveh and do that mission of God?

1. It could be because he hated the people of Nineveh who were cruel people and had previously attacked and harm Israel. It could be his anger and his lack of love toward them.
2. Jonah refused to go and preach God's Word to them because he does not want God to forgive them and save them. But he wanted God to destroy them.
3. It could be his selfishness and non willingness to suffer for others and spend on other people whom he hates.
4. It could be also his fear of them.
5. It could be doing his will and performing his own understanding. Thinking the people of Nineveh are beyond the salvation of God.

Why many they refuse to respond to the call of God in their lives? And why you refuse to do the mission work task of God? These are the possible reasons:

1. Lack of love and compassion toward the lost souls. You should have the compassion of Jesus to reach the lost souls. If you will not move to those people whom God is sending you to, they will be perishing and end up in hell.
2. Selfishness and non willingness to suffer for the sake of others. God had blessed you with many things, material and spiritual blessings and you need to use them and share them to others who are in need of the salvation of God.
3. Anger, un-forgiveness, and hatred toward the enemies. Even to those who hurt you if God ask you to go to them you need to repent of such and go.
4. It could be also your fear of men. You need to train yourself to overcome that fear through prayer and through committing yourself to God and be willing to go and do all what you can to preach to those people whom God is sending you
5. Doing your own will and performing your own understanding. Don't think that others who have the reputation being cruel, criminals, wicked, prostitutes and evil doers are far from the salvation of God. Don't think that certain nationalities, certain categories or groups are outside the reach of God's salvation.

"5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep." (Jonah 1:5 KJV) Now here you can see clearly how the mariners, the non believers, they were afraid, and they started to lighten ship to avoid sinking, and they started to pray and cry to their gods for help, but Jonah was careless and went down fast asleep. Sometimes the non believers are even better than such Christian workers who put God and His calling at their back and are careless in

attitude to respond to what God is doing around them in order to bring them back to Him. Jonah should repent when such was taken place, and come back to God, but the more he was arrogant and ignore that God is calling him to repent and come back from the wrong direction that he was heading to. You can see here the pride and the non willingness in following the leading of God and insisting to do wrong.

“6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.” (Jonah 1:6 KJV) Now here the non believers are teaching Jonah of what he needed to do. Such king of workers had forgotten what is repentance, what is prayer, what is reading God’s Word, and other basic things, and up to the point that the non believers are coming to them to teach them. They called him *O sleeper*, they told him *arise*, they instructed to *call upon God*. Shame on his face!

What meanest thou, O sleeper? What you mean by your backsliding and your departure from God. That is the rebuke of God, using non believers, to rebuke His people that may they repent.

Arise, get up and start to do the work of God and the will of God.

Call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. Start to pray, renounce your sins, and commit yourself once again to serve the Lord so that His salvation will flow through your life to reach others around you who does not know God.

“7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.” (John 1:7 KJV) So they discern and come to know that this evil had happened upon them because someone among them had done evil. You see up to this point that Jonah was careless about others are affected because of his sin and so selfish that he has no concern but to himself and how to avoid doing the will of God.

The book of Jonah is God dealing with the wrong attitude of the prophet who suppose to go to others and tell them what God want them to do, but he himself was disobedient to God and escaping to accomplish God’s will. ***Are you as such person and behaving like Jonah? If you, then the time had come to you to repent.*** The church today has many Jonah and the church today spent much time now to correct their wrong attitudes up to the point that such may cause us to neglect to reach new people.

Now, compare the attitude of Jonah who was traveling against the will of God in a ship with non believers and caused them a big problem, and Apostle Paul in **Acts 27** who was a prisoner for Christ, and how he saved the lives of all the passengers and showed them the power of God even when they sinned and travelled on wrong time against the will of God. ***Do you want to be like Jonah or like Paul in doing God’s service? Your humility, and good attitude will bring a great difference in your ministerial life and in the life of the ministry of the Church of God.***

The people on the ship cast lot in order to find out who is the cause of that problem. They used a Biblical method to find out the person involved. Casting lot is a Biblical method in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

“8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?” (Jonah 1: 8 KJV) When the lot fell on Jonah, they interrogate him to find out his secret, the truth and what he was hiding; they were so considerate with him and treated him with justice and showed him the mercy of God. That had happened, and perhaps God allowed it that he may repent.

“9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.” (Jonah 1:9 KJV) See here the boasting of Jonah. He told them that he is a Hebrew, and the meaning of Hebrew is stranger on earth, and that mean to live a life away from worldliness and away from clinching to the worldly things. But Jonah in the situation that he was in was not behaving as a real Hebrew. He told lies when he said that he fear God. In the situation that he was in Jonah did not fear God but he was doing his own.

Many Christian they pretend that they are workers or ministers but the truth about them they run away from God. Many Christians workers they speak big things and they are good in talk but their actions and their real life is like Jonah, disobedient, rebellious, arrogant, doing their own will and they boast that they are serving God.

“10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him. Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.” (Jonah 1:10 KJV) The men were so afraid from God when they heard the way Jonah spoke; inspit of all what he did wrong, is still calling himself fear God. The men on the ship were really fearing God more than Jonah, and they are aware that Jonah had fled away from the presence of the Lord as finally he told them and could not hide from them. They are the one who told Jonah, ***“Why hast thou done this?”*** The non believers were admonishing him. The men were afraid that God may strike them more because of Jonah who was with them on the ship who does not fear God. Up to the point they asked him what they need to do with him because the sea was raging and they might lost their lives, ***“11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.” (Jonah 1:11 KJV)***

“12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.” (Jonah 1:11 KJV) He told them, ***Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.*** See here the pride of Jonah; no repentance at all, and how he was putting God to the test. Many disobedient Christian workers they put God to the test, put themselves in great dangers and troubling others, but they are not willing to repent, come back to the Lord and surrender their will to Him. Don’t be like such kind of people who hardened their hearts toward God and toward doing His will. The Lord shall not go along your hard headedness, and the Lord knows how to deal with you if you are obstinate as He dealt with Jonah.

Jonah should tell them to bring the ship back to the land, drop me and you go. But he did not say that; his pride hinder him from such. ***“13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.” (Jonah 1:13 KJV)*** God did not allow them to bring the ship to the land. Why? Because Jonah is hard headed and did not repent, and God was intended to do what had come from his mouth. When you are hard headed God will let you eat and drink what had come from your mouth.

The men on the ship they came to know that they cannot keep Jonah on board but they need to throw him out, ***“14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.” (Jonah 1:14 KJV)*** So the men prayed to the Lord and asked Him His earnest mercy that He will forgive them and not make them accountable to Jonah's life, because they are going to throw him in order to please God. ***“15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.” (Jonah 1:15 KJV)*** Indeed the men throw Jonah from the ship in order to please God, and immediately the sea stop raging and came back to normal, and that concluded that Jonah was the cause of stirring the anger of God against himself and against all those who were in the ship.

My Dear and Beloved: “16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.” (Jonah 1:16 KJV) What had happened brought the fear of God upon all those who were in the ship and had caused them to know the Lord and come to Him and offered sacrifices and made their commitment and vows unto God.

When you are disobedient like Jonah, God can deal with you and can bring others toward Him and save them and cause them to commit their lives unto Him. As well as God can put you into further troubles in order to humble you and cause you to repent and force you to do His will in full as He did with Jonah, ***“17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”***

As you are passing through much struggles and troubles in your life because of your disobedient and sin, then come to the Lord in prayer of repentance and give Him your life and surrender your will in full to Him so you will be out from troubles. Soften your heart and do not be hard headed and tell the people around you to throw you as Jonah did.

Be willing to change your bad attitude and character. Get rid of anger, hatred, unforgiveness, lack of love, selfishness, fear of man, and you own understanding.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life.

Now confess and renounce all your sins. Renounce your lack of love and compassion to the lost souls, your selfishness, your non willingness to suffer, following your own understanding, doing your will, and your anger, hatred and the unforgiveness.

Lord I confess and renounce all the following sins

Lord I commit myself to change my attitude and my wrong character, to be loving, forgiving, compassionate, pursuing your will and do what is pleasant to you. Lord I commit myself to be good example to the people who are around me, and I commit myself to reproduce more fruit of the Holy Spirit so people may see you through my life.

Lord I pray for my brethren who repented, confessed their sins and returned to you to serve you and to live their lives for you, Lord help them in their lives, protect them and provide all their needs. Lord comfort them, reverse the trials that they are in, have mercy on them. give them understanding, strengthen them, assure them, remove their fear and give them peace.

Lord I pray for us as a church to be doer of your Word and to accomplish the tasks that you had called us to do for you. Lord we commit ourselves to go and move in the direction that you want us to move in reaching the lost, in evangelising, doing the good work of yours, loving our enemies, forgiving others, preaching your Word to the people around us, and show the good example to them to help them to know you through our lives and to follow you.

Lord, refill us again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in our lives. Lord enable us to evangelize and reach new people with the Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ. Lord fills us with love, mercy, justice and righteousness and enable us to plant new Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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