

Let's play hide and seek!

Whenever I see a tin can like this one, it brings back memories of my childhood days when we played a game called "Kick the Can." Actually, it was just a way to add some excitement to the old game of "Hide and Seek."

This is how the game is played: The person who is "it" stands beside the tin can, closes his eyes, and counts to fifty while everyone else hides. Then, the person who is "it" goes searching and tries to find everybody. Whenever a person is found, he races back to the home base and tries to kick the can before the one who is "it" tags them.

Doesn't that sound like fun? Even if you have never played "Kick the Can," I am sure you have played "Hide and Seek." In fact we play hide and seek in our home very often but when Cameron plays, he plays it slightly different because when he plays he runs and hides and then shouts "here I am try and find me."

Do you think anyone ever tries to play "Hide and Seek" with God? Do you remember the story of Adam and Eve? After they had eaten the fruit that God had told them not to eat, they heard God walking in the garden. They were ashamed of what they had done and didn't want God to find them. **What did they do?** They ran and hid among the trees. **Did God find them?** Sure he did. You can't hide from God.

Do you remember the story of Jonah? Let's read about Jonah tried to play hide and seek with God. Jonah 1:1 "One day long ago, God's Word came to Jonah". Jonah 1:2 "Get up and go to the city of Nineveh and preach to them." Jonah 1:2 "I have seen how wicked the people are and I can't ignore it any longer." Jonah 1:3 "He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish."

Jonah 1:3 "But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction! He went to Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish". Jonah 1:4 "But God sent a huge storm over the sea. Mighty winds and crashing waves threatened to break the ship apart". Jonah 1:5 "Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship".

Jonah 1:6 "All this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the bottom of the ship, so the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted." Jonah 1:6 "Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to you and spare our lives." Jonah 1:7 "The sailors decided they should draw straws to find out who was the cause of the storm. So they drew straws and guess who got the short straw? Jonah!"

Jonah 1:11 "The sailors asked Jonah, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?" Jonah 1:12 "Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "then the sea will be calm. This terrible storm is all my fault." Jonah 1:14 "The sailors were afraid and prayed to the God, "O God! Don't let us drown because of this man, and don't blame us for his death." Jonah 1:15 "Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the sea became calm."

God told him to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to stop sinning. **What did Jonah do?** He ran from God and tried to hide.

Psalm 139:7-10 "Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there. If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west, you would be there to lead me; you would be there to help me."

Did God find Jonah? He sure did! **And do you remember where Jonah ended up after he got thrown overboard?** Jonah found himself in the belly of a great fish!

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Jonah 1:17 "But the Lord sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights". Jonah 2:1+2 "From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God." "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. " Jonah 2:10 "Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach."

And what happened? Jonah 3:1+2 Then the Lord spoke to Jonah again: "Get up and go to the city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you." Jonah 3:3 "This time Jonah obeyed the Lord's command!"

I love watching Scooby Doo and when those guys are on an adventure to solve mysteries Scooby and Shaggy are always scared. They are always scared but they always end up solving the case don't they? And that's because that's what they do, they solve mysteries.

And guys, God may have a job He wants you to do. But you've got to ask yourself, when He calls, will you go where He sends you, or will you run and hide? After all where can you hide? In a high place, behind your friends, sitting on a log! You can't hide from God.

And that's something us adults need to remember, because some Christians hide behind their work, some Christians hide behind their circumstances and some Christians hide behind excuses.

Do you like watching the x-factor? Now some people are very talented and some people aren't, and the judges have to be very careful about whom they chose to go through to the live finals. But they usually chose people because they have talent, they can sing and probably make millions of pounds using that talent.

Now when God calls you, He calls you for a reason but He doesn't see anyone who hasn't got a talent. The Bible tells us that God chose David to be the king of Israel because he was "a man after God's own heart." (Acts 13:22) But even David did things that did not please God.

There were probably times when David wished he could hide from God, but he knew it was impossible. Listen to the words of David. Psalm 139:11+12 "I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light around me to turn into night, but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you."

We can't hide from God. He knows all about us. He knows what we are going to say before we say it and what we are going to do before we do it. It is foolish to play "Hide and Seek" with God.

So why did God look for Jonah? Why did God call you and me? Why is God going to call on you guys when you're a little older? Do you think God is going to hurt you? No!

The reason God comes seeking is because he loves us and wants to bless us. He wants you to use your talent to glorify Him and bless others. And if that's why He comes and calls on us, why would we want to hide from His blessing?