

Jonah 2

Jonah Prays from the Belly of the Fish

Last week we began looking at the fascinating story of Jonah The Prodigal Prophet

A) Saw in Chapter 1 God comes to Jonah and says

- **Arise and go to the great City of Nineveh and cry out against it ...its wickedness.. come before me**

B) God said – Go and Jonah said – No – ran in the opposite direction

³ 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.

C) Jonah goes down to Joppa – finds a ship heading to Tarshish

D) The Devil will always open doors for disobedience!

Now at this point – God could have said: Jonah is a loser – I will call Hosea or Amos another prophet who was on the scene at that time

A) But God loves Jonah – He is going to pursue him - STORM

B) Storms: Perfecting storms – Joseph –13 yrs slavery and Jail - prep for 2nd in Command
1) David – 15 yrs fugitive – prep to become King

C) Storms and trials that perfect our faith – build in us Godly character

But there are also CORRECTING STORMS

A) Sometimes they are the consequences of our sin

B) Other times they are actually sent by the Lord to get our attention

1) to wake us up to our sin and rebellion –

C) God in his grace saying – I am not going to let you go!

1) I am committed to the work that I have begun in you –

Jonah is in the CORRECTING storm –

A) The sailors are freaking out – throwing cargo overboard – livelihood – nothing is working

B) They all start crying out to their different gods to save them.

1) V.5 Jonah is down in the lowest parts of the ship – sleeping through it all!

C) Finally the sailors realize – Somebody did something to upset the gods

1) Cast lots to determine who? The lot falls on Jonah – Jonah confesses his sin – I am running from God

D) Throw me into the sea and the storm will stop!

1) The sailors reluctantly do so – Jonah is thrown in the sea –

¹⁷ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah.

And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

E) Reverse Sushi – instead of a man swallowing fish – the fish swallows the man! –

1) Wonder if the fish wished there was some soy sauce or wasabi to go with Jonah?

Note this: Jonah went down to Joppa, where he went down into a boat,

A) then he went down into the lowest parts of the boat to sleep –

B) Down into the ocean- And down into the belly of the fish

C) Any step away from God is a step down!

“Sin will always take you farther than you want to go, it will always keep you longer than you want to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to spend.” Greg Laurie

The Mathematics of sin is always the same, it will add to your sorrow, it will subtract your Joy, it will multiply your problems and divide your heart.”

Jon Courson

That is where we find Jonah down in the depths – he is about as low as he can go in the belly of the big fish. { **Where we left Jonah**

A)How did he survive in there? Seems impossible – in a fish under the ocean for 3 days.

B)Air pocket? - Miracle – God spared him {probable – Jonah actually died and was brought back to life.

C)Not sure how – but believe it did happen. Why?

1)Jesus spoke of the story of Jonah as a fact

⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:40

D)Not sure what kind of great fish – KJV whale – sea monster

E)Three days go by – before Jonah cries out to God – talk about stubborn

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said:

“I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.

3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas,

And the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.’

5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me;

Weeds were wrapped around my head.

6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever;

Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. 7 “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

8 “Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.” 10 So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Now picture this scene in the belly of the fish!

A)Wet, dark, stinky, hot humid, / Jonah has seaweed wrapped around his head. –

B)This is about as horrible as it gets and it takes Jonah 3 days before he prays! – serious

C)But when he prays – V.2 The Lord answered – 1)When we come to the end of ourselves we get to the beginning of God!

D)He is the God who hears and responds

Three things I want to point out today about Jonah's prayer 1st Jonah cries out

2nd Jonah remembers (gazes, looks, remembers)

3rd Jonah Vows

1st He cries out! -It tells us that twice

“I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.

Everybody say Sheol, This word can mean grave.

A)It can be translated as the realm of the dead.

B)I personally like the way the King James Version translates it, translated as hell.

1)From the depths of Sheol, from the depths of hell, “I called on God, and He answered me.”

C)In other words, he's saying, from the point in which I was farthest from God,

1)from the place where I was miserable and had no way to contribute,

D)from the place where I was helpless and desperate and afraid and hurting from Sheol, I called on God.

E)And He Heard my voice! David Psalm 139 where can I run from your presence?

1) If I go into Hell or even the uttermost parts of the Sea – You are there!

The Lord is speaking to some of you right now: You are in the depths of some sin – He is there – hasn't given up on you.

A)Others in the depths of despair of some kind – He is there – He is listening – Cry out to Him

B)Depths of some kind of Anxiety – quick trying to handle it on you own

1)Cry out to him. He is listening – he is the God who hears

C) Depths of your pain/ your loss – He is there – He is with you – He is listening – He is at work

D) Through the difficulty that You are in/

1) God is going to use it to give birth to something – Something great – something special – New

E) Jonah's affliction is about to give birth to a 2nd Chance!

SO #1 Jonah Cries out

What's the first step of faith? You yell. You yell, but you yell to God. You have to do something. You have to seek him. It starts by doubting yourself and doubting your doubts enough to seek him, and anybody can do that. You must do that. – Timothy Keller

A) The Bible says it all over the place. "Seek him while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near."

B) It says in Jeremiah, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." "Seek and you will find."

C) See in the gospels JESUS always responds in positive way toward the desperate heart!

D) Cry out to God! That is first thing he does

2nd things Jonah does is to remember - 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord;

And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

Now Jonah is in the dark belly of the fish -Dark- he has no idea what way is toward Jerusalem – "I Looked again toward the temple"

A) Saying in my mind I remembered your temple

B) Pastor Chuck used to say: Find yourself in a place where you don't know what is going on – fall back on what you do know.

C) That is what Jonah is doing here: In his heart and mind he begins to remember the temple.

Don't miss this: This is significant

A) Garden -presence –Kabod - forfeited – sin – separated from God –

B) The rest of Genesis and all of Exodus is about how that is going to be restored – Hint with Abraham – Faith

C) In the book of Exodus – God delivers his people from Bondage

1) Out in the wilderness – God is Ominous and can't be approached **Mountain thunder – lighting – Fire – too close die**

D) The Holiness of God –

1) THE LAW IS GIVEN – revealing God's righteous requirement - More distance

But the book of Exodus ends with God giving specific instruction to build a Tabernacle – tent of meeting –

A) 15 chapters that explain how God will meet with his people there

B) Forgiveness for sin will happen there – Not yet

C) After Leviticus comes next – Instruction on how to approach God!

1) It is going to involve sacrifices -

D) One day of the year Yom Kippur – one person can approach enter into God's presence Holy of Holies on behalf of everyone else

1) The system for approaching God is put in place

300 Yrs later – David is now King gets a desire – to build a temple -God shouldn't dwell in a tent when I live in a Palace... Can't bloody hands

A) God allows his son Solomon to build it –

B) Solomon declares that The temple will be a place of salvation- the place where sinners can meet with God

B) The temple is the symbol of the Lord's Covenant with his people that when they repent – he will forgive –

1) Blood a lamb shall cleanse them

C) This is what Jonah has in mind when he says I will look toward your temple – I will remember your temple

1) I will remember your covenant – Keep promises

D) You are a God who forgives sinners – like me!

In Psalm 42, the psalmist says,

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

A) What is the psalmist doing? He is not listening to his heart.

B) He’s talking to his heart, and that’s the difference between faith and unbelief.

C) Faith is talking to your heart, telling it the truth.

1) Doubt is listening to your heart and listening to everything it says.

D) That’s what Jonah does. Jonah starts talking to his heart – remembering the promises of God!

In his heart Jonah feels banished -cut off – his life is over!

A) But Jonah says- wait a minute. I know God built the temple.

B) I know he is willing to do anything to forgive me, and I’m going to operate on the basis of that.

1) I am going to cry out to Him – look to His temple – remember his covenant!

Jonah says something really profound in V.8 notice it

8 “Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.

A) The way the NIV puts this is interesting -

“Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs

B) Those who cling to worthless idols, they forfeit the grace or mercy that could be theirs

C) the word grace or Mercy in the Hebrew language is the word Chesed, H-e-s-e-d.

D) It means loving kindness, or it means, very literally, the pursuing love of God.

Those who cling to the stupid things of this world that do not matter, they are unable to receive the Hesed, the grace of God- loving kindness of God

A) When you cling to Substitutes for God – you hinder yourself from receiving the real thing

B) YOU forfeit the Hesed, the grace, the pursuing love of God. “That’s a bad trade.”

C) Some of you, right now, you are starting to recognize you’re making a bad trade.

D) You are holding on to things that are idols.

1) Person/ bottle/ habit/ drug/ profession

E) You are missing out on the Hesed of God.

F) What do you do? Do what Jonah did – he cried out to God –

1) He remembered God’s promise of forgiveness – Temple

#3 Jonah Vows 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”

A) Faith starts with crying out

B) It proceeds with thinking, pondering ... intense mental activity, arguing with yourself, and reminding yourself of all the facts.

C) But lastly, do you see what he says at the end? He says, “I will sacrifice to you. I will pay vows to you.”

D) Do you see where he has gone? He has gone from calling to thinking, and now, finally, to committing.

1) Saying – I am ready to surrender to your will!

Interesting: Jonah says – I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving

A) Ever find yourself saying – I can’t praise the Lord right now too low

B) Can you get any lower than Jonah? –

1) In the ocean in the dark smelly stomach of this big fish – sea monster –

2) He has seaweed wrapped around his head- gastric juices are bleaching his skin

C)It is all of matter of what you are going to focus on. – Your problems or your God who is GREATER.

1)Your circumstances that seem out of control or your Savior – the lover of your soul!

D)It is all a matter of perspective – What you focus on sets your perspective –

1)Mountain or the mountain mover!

Jonah says I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”

Note this Jonah was in the fish, and there was nothing that he could do to contribute to his salvation.

A)He couldn't go and sacrifice an innocent animal and make a sacrifice to God.

B)He couldn't give money at the temple.

C)He couldn't go and do good works. He couldn't help feed the poor!

1)Nothing he could do to contribute to getting himself out of that fish,

D))But then he said something that I hope you'll hear in a way that you never have before.

1)I couldn't contribute anything **“Salvation comes from the Lord.”**

E)Jesus did the work – He paid the price – Salvation comes from the Lord/ His shed blood/ His work –

1)His gift - You believe that – You cry out to Him – He is the God who hears

Then, verse 10 says, 10 So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

A)Jonah is born again – New start – that is what God does – when you cry out to him – faith in Him – commit your heart to him

Chapter 3:1-2

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.”

2nd Chances – third chances

A)Peter – denies – forgiven – commissioned

B)Samson – Hair began to grow again

B)Maybe you need a 2nd chance: Follow the advice of Saint Paul – get back, get back, get back to where you once belonged - Sir Paul

C)Jesus to the church of Ephesus – Remember, repent – repeat

1)Remember on fire –

2)Repent – change attitude

3)Repeat – Do those first works again

D)Get back to where you belong!