

June 9, 2019

“Jonah: A Man on the Run!”

“God’s Grace and His Unrelenting Pursuit”

“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.” Jonah 4:2b

“Sitting in the Dark”

“Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights.” Jonah 1:17

A. Jonah was swallowed up...

“Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights.” Jonah 1:17

1. What was this great fish that swallowed Jonah? Was it a whale...was it a shark...or was it a specially prepared fish for that moment?
The sperm whale is up to 70 feet long with a large enough esophagus to hold Jonah.
The great white shark could hold a 6-foot blue shark for days without digesting it.
Or God could have provided this special fish for just this moment.
2. There are several supposed accounts of those swallowed by a whale. James Bartley was one of those.
3. This would not be the first account of God using animals to fulfill His will.
 - Noah used a dove and a raven to determine if the floods had receded.
 - Balaam’s donkey saw an angel and stopped in his tracks. When Balaam beat the donkey, the donkey spoke to Balaam.
 - Elijah was fed by ravens that supplied his food.
 - Daniel survived when God closed the mouths of hungry lions.
 - Pastor Paul in the Middle East survived Isis through an attack of lions on Isis.

“My God sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me...” Daniel 6:22

B. When Jonah hit bottom, he prayed...

“Nothing clears the mind like the certain knowledge that you will be shot in the morning.” –Samuel Johnson

1. Jonah cried out for help.

“I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and He answered me. I called to You from the land of the dead, and LORD, You heard me!” Vs 2

2. Jonah knew that God had placed him where he was and was not going to blame anyone or anything else.

“You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath Your wild and stormy waves.” Vs 3

3. Jonah was ready to look to God for his help.

“Then I said, ‘O LORD, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward Your holy Temple.’” Vs 4

4. Jonah believed he was going to die and knew God was his only hope.

“I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head.” Vs 5

5. Jonah’s life was ebbing away and God had his full attention.

“But you, O LORD my God, snatched me from the jaws of death! As my life was slipping away, I remembered the LORD. And my earnest prayer went out to You in Your holy Temple.” Vs 6b-7

6. If he survived, he vowed to fully serve the Lord.

“But I will offer sacrifices to You with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the LORD alone.” Vs 9

7. Our salvation lies in nothing else but God.

“Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.” Vs 10

C. Jonah’s prayer was a Psalm...

1. Jonah knew Scripture as his prayer was very much a Psalm.

- "Your billows swept over me" [2:3] Compare with Psalm 42:7.
- "I have been banished" [2:4]. Compare with Psalm 31:22.
- "engulfed me up the neck" [2:5]. Compare with Psalm 69:1.
- "my life was fading away" [2:7]. Compare with Psalm 147:3.

- "To Your holy Temple" [2:7]. Compare with Psalm 18:6.
 - "to worthless idols" [2:8]. Compare with Psalm 31:6
 - "Salvation is from the Lord" [2:9]. Compare with Psalm 3:8
2. Knowing God’s Word is no guarantee to following His will...that requires obedience.
 3. God always speaks through His Word.
 4. God guides our thoughts by His thoughts.
 5. God’s Word becomes a cleansing agent to our mind.
 6. God’s Word is a compass to all our life.

“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105

D. God delights in rescuing His children...

1. How long has it been since you honestly talked to God? A great introspective question is, “Lord, show me the truth about myself.” When we pray, little by little, the Holy Spirit will show us our weaknesses, our faults, our mistakes, our bad attitudes, our foolish words, our pride, our arrogance, our need to be in control, our need to tell others what to do, our desire to have our own way, our anger, our bitterness, our lack of mercy, our lack of love and our lack of compassion.
2. God had to stop Jonah in his tracks to get his attention. Does God have your full attention? Or are you distracted by life, work, family, etc.?
3. God delights to rescue us from impossible situations. Are you in a place where you know that only God could rescue you? Are you willing to let Him do His complete work in and through you so that can happen?

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:2

Next week:

June 16: “Hearing and Obeying”

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.’ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord...” Jonah 1:2-3a