

Jonah, Part 2 of 4

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Review of Jonah

- Word of the LORD comes to Jonah — go to Nineveh.
 - He runs in the opposite direction — away from the presence of the LORD
 - The seamen throw him in the water
 - A great fish swallows him
 - Today: we are studying a worship song — written in a whale!
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Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance

- **Jonah 1:17 – 2:10**

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. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. 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. 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. Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. 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. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple." "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

- **Jonah chapter two teaches us today about how to get set free.** How to cry out to God and experience deliverance.
 - We all need deliverance from the darkest and most confined parts of our lives. **Jonah teaches us about crying out to God.**
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Inside the belly of a whale

- **Jonah 1:17**

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.

- Allegory? Resurrection story? Unique fish "prepared" for this purpose? **Miracle!**
- True story. Jesus mentions Jonah by name. Bible talks about his lineage.
- Horrific! Germaphobe? Claustrophobic? Darkness? Drowning? Heat— about 100 degrees

- **Jonah 2:1-2**

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me.

- **Don't rob people from their bottom.**

- Popular recovery concept. Its important not to steal the reality, the consequences of their sin, from them.
 - For Jonah it's because of his affliction that he cries out to God. He would climb right back in the boat!!!

- **Jonah 2:2**

Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice

- Out of the belly of Sheol. The phrase does not necessarily indicate that Jonah actually died. Sheol frequently has a hyperbolic meaning in contexts where it denotes a catastrophic condition near death (Psalm 30:3).
 - **Confinement.** God speaks to us through our stuck places. Ever feel completely stuck? Trapped? Like nothing you do would ever change anything? Sometimes confinement is exactly what we need, to deal with God. Jonah battled God until there was nowhere else to go.
 - **Until Jonah stopped, God did not move on his behalf.** Does God have you confined into a spot you don't want to be? Maybe he has you right where you need to be?

- **Jonah 2:3-4**

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

- **Sometimes we feel like God has left us and we are on our own** but he is there, protecting us throughout the night. Children of God, we are never truly alone.

- **Jonah 2:5-6**

The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever;

- **When you get to the most hopeless place.** Look up. The bars close behind you. When you are trapped and it seems like there is no way out — God has a way of showing up and showing off.

- **Jonah 2:6**

Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.

- **You can't bring yourself out of the pit.** You need the Lord to save you! You can't save yourself from sin. Why would you think you can save yourself from the pit you are in right now?

- **Salvation is not just for people that don't believe. We all need saved — every day!** Jonah believes in God, but he is far from Him. He knows God, but he finds himself in a pit of his own making — BUT GOD SAVES — it's who He is. He is a Savior!!! Deliverer! King over all my circumstances!!!
- **Jonah 2:7**
When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord;
 - **Stop fighting.** Take a deep soul breath. Surrender.
- **Jonah 2:7-8**
And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols; Forsake their own Mercy.
 - When we are afraid we hold dearly to the very things that do nothing.
 - We grip our idols tight.
 - Hitting Rock bottom, struggles, and pain — exposes our idols.
 - An idol is anything that puts itself in the pre-eminent position of our lives.
 - **Anything can be an idol.** Wife, Kids, Job, Success, Money, Ministry
 - *An idol is the thing you are waiting for God to do — and THEN you will worship him.*
- **Jonah 2:9**
But I will sacrifice to You, With the voice of thanksgiving;
 - **Gratitude releases all idols into the hands of God.**
 - Gratitude is not giving up! **It is positioning yourself in worship.**
 - It loosens our hands — when we release our lives to God — we get set free
 - **Gratitude is a daily choice** — a habit that leads to life!
 - Practicing even five minutes of gratitude repositions you, releases you, and sets you free for God's purposes in your life.
 - JONAH praises God from the belly of a whale?! You can praise Him.
 - JONAH worships God — and THEN gets saved.
 - NOT God — *get me out of this — THEN I will worship you.*
 - Worship first! Then, trust God with the rest.
 - Jesus says to, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the rest will be given to you." (Matthew 6:33)
- **Jonah 2:9**
I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.
 - *Are you waiting for God to do something before you will praise him, cry out to him? Follow Him? Trust him? Walk with him? Love him? Serve him? If you will.... then I will.....*

The sign of Jonah

- **Matthew 12:38-42**

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 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.”

- **What is the sign of Jonah that Jesus refers to?**

- Jesus crucified, buried, and three days later RAISED FROM THE DEAD!
- We want a SIGN — and THEN we will believe He is the LORD — *and he wants you to trust him first.*
- We want out of the pit. But Jesus wants us to LIVE!
- We want to hold onto our idols — he wants to deliver us from the pit!
- *There is more to life than just surviving. Worship God, release your idols and cry out to Jesus who saves.*

- **Jonah 2:9**

So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

- **Jonah proclaims — Jesus Saves!** He gets spit out on the shore.

Summary

- You are never so far gone that God will not hear you. He is deeper still.
- Our confinement can actually quiet us, if we stop, to cry out to him.
- The hopeless areas of our lives teach us about our worthless idols.
- Anything can be an idol.
- Whatever your waiting for God to do, and THEN you will worship Him — is an idol.
- Our daily gratitude releases our grip on all our idols.
- Seek first the kingdom, and all the other things will be added.
- We want out of the pit. Jesus is the only way out.
- Look up, Cry out, Worship — watch and see God deliver you

Prayer

“(WE) cr(y) out to (you) Lord because of (our) affliction, And (You) answer (us). “Out of the belly of (hell) (we) cried, And You heard (our) voice.

3 You cast (us) into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surround (us); All Your billows and Your waves passed over (us).

4 (We) have been cast out of Your sight; (We) look again toward Your holy temple.’ 5 (Even when) The waters surrounded us, even to (our) souls; (even when the) deep close(s) around (us); (the sin that so easily entangles us)

6 (we) went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind us forever;

Yet You have brought up (our lives) from the pit, O Lord, God.

7 “When (our souls feinted), (We) remember (you) Jesus; (We cry out) to You, In Your holy temple.

8 “(we cast down our) worthless idols (and beg for your) Mercy.

9 (We bring a sacrifice of praise);

(We will put our confidence in you.) (Salvation is found in no other name but Jesus.) AMEN

Discussion Questions

1. How have you personally visualized Jonah inside the big fish for three days?
2. What does it mean, “Don’t rob people from their bottom”?
3. Has God ever had to “confine” you to get you to stop and listen?
What did it take before He was ready to let you move on?
4. What assurance do you have that God is there, even when you get to the most hopeless place?
5. Why is it so hard to stop fighting, surrender, take a “deep soul breath,” and ask God to save you?
6. What happens when you begin to live a life of daily gratitude?