

Jonah – The Repentant Prophet

Text : **Jonah 1: 17 – 2: 10**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. We are studying one of the most often misunderstood books of the bible.**
1. The book of Jonah is located in the Minor Prophets, but it's not a prophesy.
 2. It is an historical account about God's dealings with one of His prophets.
 - a. Jonah is referred to as one through whom God spoke. (**II King 14: 25**)
 - b. He is also referred to as a “**servant**” of God. (*ibid*)
 3. We know Jonah is a true historical account because Jesus repeatedly references it.
 - a. **Matt. 16: 4** ... Jewish leaders request a sign
 - b. **Luke 11: 29-32** ... Rebuked the crowd for requesting a sign
 - c. These references imply a pattern, perhaps a standard response to requests for signs.
- B. The book of Jonah requires more faith than some to understand or even accept.**
1. Jonah contains at least 10 miracles which defy scientific explanation.
 2. Most skeptics and some who are weak in faith get hung up on the fish story.
 3. The book has vital lessons for anyone who will maintain a relationship with God.
 - a. God is totally and universally sovereign.
 - b. God cares about every person on earth.
 - c. God disciplines those whom He loves.
- C. God's servant, the prophet Jonah did not understand God.**
1. He thought God was geographically limited to the nations of Israel and Judah.
 2. He thought God was dependent on him to carry His message. (**He controlled God.**)
 - a. Thus, by refusing to go he thought he was limiting God's ability to save Nineveh.
 - b. Mordecai had a better understanding of God's providence than did the prophet :
Esther 4: 14 – For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?
 - c. Whether we fulfill it or not, God has a plan for every one of His children.
I Cor. 12: 18 – But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (God plans every member.)
 3. My point here is : *We should all be aware that we don't always understand all that we think we understand. We must always be seekers.*

I. Jonah had to realize that he was nothing and God was everything.

A. Every man needs salvation.

1. **Rom. 3: 9b-10** ... Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ as it is written,
There is none righteous, not even one; (cf – **Psa 14: 1-3, 53: 1-3**)
2. **Rom. 3: 23** – ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (**Rom. 6: 23**)

B. No man can save himself.

1. No man can purge himself from sin.
Prov. 20: 9 – Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin”?
2. There is no way that one man can purge the sins of another man.
Psa. 49: 5-9 ... ⁷ No man can by any means redeem his brother
or give to God a ransom for him — ...

C. ONLY the sovereign God of the universe can save.

1. And, He does so on His own terms.
2. NO ONE negotiates terms with God.
3. **He Demands Total Surrender !!**
 - a. God does not save people on the basis of mental ascent, belief. **Matt. 7:21-23**
 - b. God does not save people on the basis of obedience to commands. **Eph. 2: 8-9**
 - c. He does save people on the basis of a totally surrendered heart.
Luke 9: 23-24 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me,
he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

* *In this passage, Jesus is requiring surrender ... not physical death.*

D. Jonah did not surrender until he found himself in the fish’s belly.

1. Have you ever felt “*Lower than a whale’s belly?*”
Jonah not only felt it, he was it.
 - a. The **current** grabbed Jonah and carried him down. Vs. **3**
 - b. He was on the sea floor entangled in the **weeds**. Vs. **5**
 - c. He was at the “**roots of the mountains.**” Vs. **6**
2. Just when he thought he was going to die in the sea, he was eaten by a fish.
 - a. Imagine being alive in the belly of a fish.
 - b. It would be totally dark.
 - c. It would be the temperature of the deep water.

- d. One would not be able to move about.
 - e. Everything else the fish ate would be in there with you ... being digested.
 - f. It would smell really bad.
 - g. Only God could sustain your life there.
3. Jonah reached the point of total hopelessness.
- a. He realized that nothing was in his control.
 - b. He couldn't even die. *God was sustaining his life.*
4. It was at this point that Jonah surrendered to God and cried out for mercy.

E. When is the last time you were in the fish's belly ?

1. It is from the fish's belly that calls for salvation are heard.
2. It is only when a one realizes that he is totally dependent upon Jesus that God will save that person.
 - a. David understood this when he penned :

Psa. 51: 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in
 Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when
-16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not
 pleased with burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
 A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
 - b. When is the last time you were in the fish's belly crying out for salvation ?
3. Many Christians have never had such an experience.
 - a. We grew up attending church and never committed many of the sins others did.
 - b. We were never convicted of sin, but one day we knew it was time to be baptized.
4. This is often the normal course, but it can have some very negative consequences.
 - a. We don't have the same level of gratitude as those who were forgiven much.

Luke 7: 47 – For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been
 forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.
 - b. Some of us even develop the attitude Jesus attributed to the Pharisee in :

Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the
 other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I
 thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like
 this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get. **13** But the tax
 collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to
 Heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14** I
 tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who
 exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

II. Jonah prayed to God as an expression of his heart.

A. Jonah had received what he wanted from the Lord, separation from God, now he didn't want what he got. (*Be careful what you pray for*)

1. The reason he got on the ship was to escape the presence of the Lord.
2. Now he is seeking the Lord's face. Vs. 4
3. Isolation from God is part of the eternal punishment of unbelievers.

II Thes. 1: 9 – These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

B. Though there are only 4 chapt, 48 vss, the better part of a chapter is a prayer

1. This would indicate that God places an importance on the prayer.
2. Vs. 10 .. It's a prayer that was heard by God and answered positively for supplicant.
3. It has something to teach us. (**Rom. 15: 4** ... *Typical of all the O.T.*)

C. Jonah literally prays the Psalms. Every verse references at least one Psalm.

Vs. – 2 **Psa. 30: 3, 20: 1**

Vs. – 3 **Psa. 42: 7**

Vs. – 4 **Psa. 5: 7, 31: 22**

Vs. – 5 **Psa. 69: 1-2, 15**

Vs. – 6 **Psa. 18: 6**

Vs. – 8 **Psa. 31: 6**

Vs. – 9 **Psa. 116: 17-18**

- a. The penitent prophet spoke to God in His own words. *He knew the scriptures.*
- b. One has to know the scriptures before he can use them.
Hosea 4: 6 – My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
- c. The Psalms is a course wherein God teaches us to pray.
For example ... Psalm # 51 sets the standard for all penitent prayers.

D. It is good for us to study the prayers recorded in the bible.

1. Not for the sake of vain repetition as with those who repeat the Lord's prayer.
2. Abraham was the father of the faithful and a friend of God.
3. Moses spoke with God more than anyone other than Jesus.
4. Hezekiah's prayers changed history and extended his life.
5. The prayers of Jesus and of Paul teach us about living with God's heart.

III. God's discipline does not imply God's rejection. (*Some adversities just come.*)

A. God disciplines those whom He loves.

1. **Hebrews 12: 5-8** You have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; **6** For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.
2. The purpose of God's discipline is not to punish or to push away.
 - a. Discipline is used to train us to serve and to glorify God.
 - b. God trains us because he loves us. (*Wants for us to succeed.*)
3. Logically ... The absence of discipline indicates rejection rather than acceptance.
 - a. Looking at your own life, ... how has God disciplined you ?
 - b. When has God disciplined you ? *What have you learned from it ?*
 - c. If there is no evidence of God's discipline, what does that tell you ?

B. Discipline is only of value if it's received with a loving and submissive attitude.

1. It's the same everywhere ... the home, the workplace, society in general, the church.
2. Discipline makes some people angry, bitter, and rebellious.
 - a. *Rather than learn they want to get even.*
 - b. They become competitive.
3. James teaches us this same principle about learning patience by enduring trials.
 - a. **James 1: 2-3** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
 - b. Some grow resentful when they undergo trials and even get angry with God.

C. God will combine all the events of our life and use them for our good.

1. I love good hot biscuits, but I can't imagine that I'd enjoy eating all the ingredients individually. (Salt, baking powder, flower, lard, etc.)
2. When all of the ingredients of our life are put together under enough heat, they produce something much grander than a biscuit.
3. Once the baking is done, it's not the biscuit that gets the praise but the cook.
4. Our lives are not all about ourselves; they're about the glory of our maker.

IV. Man has but one duty in life and that to bring glory to his maker.

A. Most men live in rebellion against God, but no man is the master of his destiny.

1. God owns man by virtue of creation.
 - a. God created man so man belongs to God. **Psa. 24: 1**
 - b. God weaves each man together in the womb of his mother. **Psa. 139: 13**
2. God owns the planet upon which man lives. **Psa. 50: 12**
 - a. Thus, God owns the raw material from which man is made. (*dust of the earth*)
 - b. God owns all that man consumes to sustain his life.
3. God gave life to man. **Gen. 2: 7**
 - a. Man can put all of the elements of living things together, but he can't make it live.
 - b. To this day ... **only** God can give life. **THUS ... all life belongs to God.**

B. God also owns the Christian because He bought him back from his captor.

1. Satan ensnares men with sin and enslaves them to serve him. (*To share his destiny*)
2. Jesus gave Himself a ransom to buy back the sinner. **I Tim. 2: 3-6**
3. He shed His holy blood because He does not want for anyone to be lost.
4. **II Pet. 3: 9** – **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

C. Beloved, You can't get so far away from God that he won't receive you back if you will repent of your sins and recommit yourself to serving Him.

1. Jonah is not an isolated incident; God is the God of second chances.
 - a. Abraham went his own way to get a son (*Ishmael*) but God gave him the promise
 - b. David committed adultery and murder, but God took him back.
 - c. Peter denied Christ, but he was chosen to preach the first gospel sermon.
 - d. Paul tried to destroy the church, but God chose him to preach to the gentiles.
2. No matter how far you have run from God He will welcome you back.
 - a. You must realize that you are in the fish's belly.
 - b. You must reject your folly and return to Him.

CONCLUSION :

Jesus waits to receive you. Will you turn back from Tarshish ?

Lesson Text :

Jonah 1: 17 – 2: 10

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Chapter 2

1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, **2** and he said, “I called out of my distress to the LORD, and He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. **3** For You had cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. **4** So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ **5** Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head. **6** I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. **7** While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. **8** “Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, **9** But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD.”

10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.