

Jonah – The Mercy of God and the Actions of Man

Week 6 – God Saves His People

Jonah 2:1-10

God mercifully saves His people from their sin and disobedience

Action: We will acknowledge God's mercy to us in our sin and disobedience and praise Him for His saving and patient work

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

A shepherd finds a lamb in a dark cave. It has no mother or father, and it will not survive alone. He picks up the lamb and carries it to become of his flock. It grows up as a sheep in the shepherd's flock. One day, the sheep goes missing. The shepherd leaves the other sheep of his flock and goes searching for the one who is lost. The lost sheep is found. It is stuck in a crack in the ground and is unable to escape. This situation is difficult for the sheep. He wandered away and got himself stuck. He needs the shepherd. The sheep screams out in distress. The shepherd hears the sheep, finds the sheep, and saves the sheep. Now the shepherd has saved the sheep twice. Once to belonging and once from self-induced traps.

Such it is with our Father. When He saved us from death and darkness, He made us His own. Once His, our Father doesn't ignore us and leave us alone. He is aware that we will get ourselves into situations that are destructive. He doesn't continue adopting us into His family, but He will continue rescuing us from blindness, ignorance, and apathy that sin causes.

Merciful Reminder (SLIDE 2)

Do You Do Well to be Angry?

Series Graphic (SLIDE 3)

Read

Jonah 2:1-10 ESV

(SLIDE 4) **1** Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, **2** saying,

“I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, 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 flood surrounded me; all your breakers and your waves passed over me. **4** Then I said, ‘I am riven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’

(SLIDE 5) **5** The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head. **6** To the roots of the mountains I went down, to the land whose bars closed upon me forever. Yet you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. **7** When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. **8** Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. **9** But I with

the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!”

(SLIDE 6) 10 And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 7)

Notes on Jonah 2:1-10

A Belly Cry (v. 1 - 2)

Jonah is in the belly of the huge fish for 3 days and 3 nights. In the belly, Jonah prays to God. Notice that Jonah is not asleep. He slept in the belly of the boat, but he is very awake now in the belly of the fish. Now awakened, he prays. This prayer gives the reader insight into what happened to Jonah when he was thrown into the raging sea. Jonah writes that his prayer was a calling out to God. The nature of the calling out is revealed in that Jonah was in distress. Jonah is in a deathly situation, and he turns to God. Jonah's cries are not ignored, but Jonah writes that God hears Jonah and answers him. Jonah describes this situation he is in as “the belly of Sheol”. Sheol is a Hebrew term used to refer to the place of dead people or the realm of the dead. There are allusions to Sheol being Hell, but that is not its direct use in the OT. Jonah would not be writing that he was in hell, but that he was in a place of death or with the dead. God's presence is not absent in this place of the dead. Jonah calls out and God hears him. This cry from the belly of the huge fish is heard by God and God moves to action because Jonah is God's man and God's will is for Jonah to take the message of salvation to the Ninevites. God hears Jonah's cry and prayer and saves Jonah.

The Plan and Creation Are God's (v. 3)

Jonah writes something that is revelatory to Jonah and to the reader. God is the agent at work in this account. It wasn't the hands of pagan men that caused Jonah to be in the raging sea, God was at work. God is at work aligning Jonah to His desires. Jonah is thrown into the center of the vast waters (depth and width). Jonah is completely submerged into the vast depths of the waters. Jonah continues ascribing ownership and control to God. Jonah writes, “your waves” and “your billows” (the heaping up of waves), helping us to see what Jonah knew. God was in control of everything that was happening, and it was for His great pleasure.

Heaven is the Only Hope (v. 4)

Jonah, surrounded by the sea, thinks that he has sinned in such a way that God has rejected Jonah and abandoned him. Jonah thinks this is a temporary situation. He continues that though the situation seems full of despair, Jonah belongs to God and God will care for Jonah. It looks like Jonah thinks his life in this earthly world is ending and he will be brought into God's presence and see God's heavenly dwelling. Jonah is in a place he cannot be rescued from physically, but there is spiritual hope. His hope is to be saved and dwell with God. Heaven is Jonah's only hope now.

Pit of Despair (v. 5-6)

Where was Jonah to think that Heaven was his only hope? Verses five and six describe what happened to Jonah when he was tossed overboard. In the hopeless situation, the waters closed in over Jonah, the deep surrounded him, the weeds wrapped around his head at the deepest parts of the sea. He has arrived on land, but it is not dry land, but the ocean floor. Reaching the bottom of the ocean, Jonah becomes trapped. His description is like he was pitched into a jail cell, and the doors are shut with no hope of escape. This is the pit of despair and Jonah is hopeless. Yet something happens in the depths. When all hope is lost, God reveals that He is not absent, He has not rejected, and He is not deaf. God sees, hears, and is present with Jonah. He rescues Jonah. God secures Jonah and brings Him up from the pit! Jonah responds in adoration and praise. Oh Lord my God! This is a declaration of God the King of the universe and a declaration of God as the King to whom Jonah is subject.

God's Steadfast Love (v. 7-8)

God causes Jonah to remember God. Jonah's life is fading away because he is in a place where he cannot survive. Yet, God turns His face toward Jonah and Jonah remembers God. This isn't the time appointed for Jonah to appear before God in His temple. Jonah writes that his prayers made their way to God and entered God's dwelling. God hears the prayer of Jonah. This is reality for God's people. We will not be faithful to love God, but God is always faithful and perfect in loving His people. God is unwavering and resolute in loving His people. God's steadfast love is perfect and never fails. Yet, people turn to idols. All idols are worthless, empty, futile, destructive, and deceptive. They are things we can see and feel, but are incapable of life, living or giving. God is faithful and living. People who turn to idols forsake any hope, because they place their hope in something that is fake, and their lives are lost. God is our only hope and He is forever faithful to His people. We have eternal hope that will always satisfy!

Gratitude and Worship (v. 9)

God's faithful love rescues His helpless and hopeless people, and they find hope in Him! God causes His people to use their voice to give an offering of praise to Him. A sacrifice that is not an animal, but a shout of thanksgiving. This roar of praise and thanksgiving is an act of worship that pleases our God. The actions God's people commit to God, vows, they will keep with God's sustaining help. Jonah declares that if he says it, makes a vow, then he will do it. In the pit of despair, Jonah declares that there is hope and salvation. Jonah declares that salvation is completely the work of God. The fruit of faith produces belief about truths about God. Salvation is in God alone!

Jonah's "Resurrection" (v. 10)

The end of the third day and third night, as Jonah declared the truth of God and humbly offered a sacrifice of praise, God gives a command and the huge fish obeys. The fish vomits Jonah out of his belly. Jonah isn't vomited back into the depths and rage of the ocean, but Jonah is vomited onto dry land. God commanded the fish to swallow Jonah in rescue from drowning in the depths of the ocean. Then the fish transports Jonah east toward dry land. When the fish reaches the

western shores of Assyria, the fish vomits Jonah onto dry land. Jonah has been saved, humbled by God, brought back into God's plan and in alignment with God's will. Jonah now stands saved and covered in fish vomit upon dry land. Jonah has been "resurrected" from the place of death to carry out God's command and to go!

God Mercifully Saves His People (SLIDE 8)

Dead Made Alive (Justification) (SLIDE 9)

Dead in sin

Made Alive

Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Sleeper Awakened (Transformation) (SLIDE 10)

Oblivious Life to Spiritual Discernment

We have faith, but we are not aware of what God is doing

Hearts and Minds Zealous for Good Works

We are aware of God, of His work around us, and we desire to be a part of His work and to bring God glory!

Titus 2:11-14 ESV

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Pray Asking God to Mercifully Save You (SLIDE 11)

Give You Faith and Make You His

Stirs Your Heart and Mind

Towards Him

To His Work

For His Kingdom

To His Glory

For His People

Read

Ephesians 4:17-24 ESV

(SLIDE 13) **17** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. **18** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **19** They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

(SLIDE 14) **20** But that is not the way you learned Christ!— **21** assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Series Graphic **(SLIDE 15)**

Daily Readings

Week 6 – God Saves His People

Day 1

Ephesians 4:17-24 ESV

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. **18** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **19** They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. **20** But that is not the way you learned Christ!— **21** assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23** and to be

renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

God has given you faith and it changes everything about you. You are not blind, living in the dark, with a hardened heart. You are a new person who is growing in righteousness and living in holiness. God has given you the Spirit and He is renewing you daily from your old way of life to your new life, which is the likeness of God. God saved you and saves you. God saved you from death and gave you life. God saves you from things that threaten to destroy you and make you ignorant of God's work. Praise God for saving you!

Day 2

Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

There was a time when you were a dead person. You didn't know it then, but when you were given life in Jesus Christ, you realized that you were dead. God's love gave you life! His life-giving work brought you into Christ. This is an incredibly generous gift, given from God's love. This gift shows God's mercy towards His people. God's mercy gave you life rather than wrath. Praise God for saving you!

Day 3

1 Thessalonians 5:5-6 ESV

5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. **6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

You might be in a season where sin has worked its way back in and is disrupting you in profound ways. It may not cause you to be drowsy, but it is causing you to be spiritual lazy, unable to see what God is doing around you, and indifferent to take action to serve, encourage, fight, care, or respond spiritually. As God's people, Christians are to keep awake spiritually and be sober to respond to the Holy Spirit as He guides them. You are a person of the light and, maybe, you find yourself sleepy and not engage in God's work in you, around you, or through you. Pray and ask God to awaken your heart and mind. What will you do today to wake up? God saves His people from sleeping and living in darkness. You are His and you live in the Light of God!

Day 4

Titus 2:11-14 ESV

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Day 5

Hebrews 3:12-13 ESV

12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. **13** But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The devastation of sin is that it affects our hearts and our minds, then it infects our actions. Realize that any sin that lingers and is not dealt with before God will infect the believer’s heart. Take a moment today and be encouraged to ask God to examine your heart, mind, and actions today. As God reveals sin, ask God to remove it and ask Him to forgive you for that sin. Receive His forgiveness and praise His work to save you from the hardening effects of sin. God works to help you abide with Him and love His work. Praise God that He saves His people!