

God Provides Rescue Jonah 1:17-2:10

Lesson Objective

- **Big Idea:** *Our repentance is more important than our relief.* {The focus of this study is the difficulties we experience resulting from our disobedience as opposed to suffering for righteousness or being victimized by others. This study does not intend to minimize the pain that people feel; however, tragedy such as Jonah experienced may be an indicator that God is trying to get our attention. If so, our loving Father may at times be pointing to sin in our lives which requires repentance. He desires our submission to His sovereign purposes so that we can join with Jonah in saying, “Salvation comes from the Lord”}
 - **Problem:** *We sometimes experience difficult circumstances as God disciplines us as a result of our disobedience. (Yet His intentions are loving regardless of the pain we may feel.)*
 - **Redemptive Solution:** *Just as God rescued Jonah and brought him to repentance, our all powerful God has rescued us from our sin through the death & resurrection of Jesus. When we repent (confess & turn away from our sin) God is faithful and just to purify us from unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).*
 - **Response:** *Choose to submit to God in an area of disobedience.*
 - **Outreach Focus: Holy Spirit & Prayer**
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Launch

- **Why do bad things happen to good people/believers?** A few possibilities: sometimes a result of our sin, sometimes just a result of living in a broken world, sometimes because of doing the right thing. (*it's a launch so no need to give/come to a consensus on a correct the answers, simply discuss*)

In the first chapter of Jonah we learned from Jonah's experiences that limited obedience reveals a defective fear of God. This week we pick up his story again and find him thrown into the sea.

Explore

Read Jonah 1:17-2:10

- **Just for fun, what would you title this chapter?**
- **Who are the characters in this passage?** God, Jonah, Fish
- **When do these events take place?** After Jonah fled from the Lord and God caused a storm and he was thrown into the sea by his own accord to calm the storm and save the other sailors.
- **Where do the events take place?** In the sea, in the belly of the fish.
- **Why do these events occur? What does this tell us about God?** To demonstrate God's power to rescue (sovereign deliverance) and to bring Jonah to repentance. This tells us that God is all powerful and desires us to repent and submit to God's commission.
- **What stood out as significant to you in Jonah's prayer & what happens?** *Jonah's prayer beginning in verse 2 is Hebrew poetry. A summary statement begins this thanksgiving psalm which was composed after Jonah's deliverance (ex. Psalm 18:6, 30:4). Although English poetry has rhymes, Hebrew uses similar statements to communicate one idea.*
 - **Worthless Idols (Vain Idols, False Gods):** From verse 8, Literally means false vanities or empty nothings. A derogatory allusion to the gods of the sailors in 1:6.
 - **Grace:** From the end of verse 8, Literally, covenant faithfulness to the only true God. This refers to the covenant that God established with Israel and founded on His loyal love.
 - **Salvation:** Jonah's acknowledgement of God's absolute sovereignty in granting deliverance
- **What questions do you have about the passage? (possible questions)**
 - **Vowed:** Indicates Jonah's complete obedience
 - **Grave, Pit:** Figurative for life-threatening danger

- o **Inside the Fish:** It's likely that Jonah was not fully conscious when he was swallowed by the fish. The author does not elaborate on the fish's nature or activity. All the author desires the reader to know is that the fish is subject to God (reference Matthew 17:24-27).

Let's examine further what God does and how Jonah responds.

- **What does God do in Jonah 1:17?** Provides a fish to swallow Jonah
 - o **What would you have felt if you were Jonah?**
 - o **What does this tell you about God?** He wasn't out to destroy Jonah; He can provide unlikely means of deliverance.
- **What does God do in Jonah 2:3?** Hurls Jonah into the sea
 - o **How did God hurl him into the sea?** By causing the storm; by the sailors' hand (Jonah's direction to calm the storm)
 - o **What does this tell you about God?** He deals with sin, He actively disciplines, He doesn't just look the other way.
 - o **What does God do in Jonah 2:10?** Saves Jonah by commanding the fish to vomit him onto dry land
 - o **What does this tell you about God?** He is merciful, able and willing to save; He offers second chances for obedience.
- **What characterizes Jonah in Chapter 1?** Fleeing from God
- **What characterizes Jonah in Chapter 2?** Submission to God
- **What did it take to get him there?** Discipline, catastrophe
 - o **So, what was God doing by allowing Jonah to be thrown overboard?** Bring him to submission, repentance, obedience.

Apply

In chapter 2 we found Jonah in a tragedy of his own making. God designed the circumstances to bring Jonah to the point of willingness to obey his original commission. Likewise, God will intervene in our lives, sometimes with negative circumstances, to cause us to submit to His direction.

*Tonight we read Jonah's prayer to God while he was in the fish and explored the change in Jonah's heart condition toward God. **How does Jonah's prayer reflect his heart change? *pass out handout page***

Turn in groups of 2 or 3 to answer the following: Is there any hardship you are experiencing that may be a result of God trying to get your attention? If so, would you be willing to share? *Hardship: A condition that is difficult to endure; suffering; deprivation; oppression; restlessness of spirit*

- **How can or how has prayer changed your heart and focus in the midst of hardships?**
- **What areas of your life are not submitted to God? How can you demonstrate submission to God?**
- **Consider the word picture called Spiritual Breathing:** Spiritual breathing is a powerful word picture which can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence on the Spirit. Exhale: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it- agree with God concerning it and thank him for His forgiveness according to 1 John 1:9. Confessing requires repentance- a change in attitude & action. Inhale: Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to his command (Ephesians 5:18) and promise (1 John 5:14-15).
- **Pray for what you and your partner shared.**

Practical Steps This Week: *We want to focus on prayer in a couple of specific ways. Last week we examined our heart motivation related to obeying God's commission. This week we want to pray not just for*

ourselves to grow in submission to God, but also to begin praying specifically for others who do not yet know Jesus to have opportunities to hear and respond to the Gospel.

- Regularly practice confession of sin through prayer to personally experience the gospel. (Spiritual Breathing)
- Begin praying daily for 5 people who God has placed in your life who do not know Him. Ask the Lord to help you see how He is working in their lives. If you have the opportunity, ask the 5 people, “*How can I pray for you this week?*”

My Top 5 List: _____

Seven Ways to Pray for Those Who Don't Yet Know Jesus | *from SENT, by Heather & Ashley Holleman*

1. Ask God to send a “Spirit of wisdom & revelation” to that person. –Ephesians 1:17-19
2. Ask God to “turn [their] eyes from worthless things” and that they “come to their senses.” –Psalm 119:37
3. Ask God to send others to help. –Matthew 9:38
4. Ask God for an open door for the gospel. –Colossians 4:2-4
5. Ask God to give you boldness to overcome your fear. –Ephesians 6:19-20.
6. Pray the message of Christ spreads quickly. –2 Thessalonians 3:1.
7. Ask God to continue to instruct you in *when, where, how,* and *to whom* He would like you to communicate the gospel. –Psalm 32:8.

Next week, we'll continue in Jonah and see what happens when Jonah goes to Nineveh and how the people respond to his message. Leader close in prayer.