

Series: Seas of Grace

C.R. 5-1-22

“Prayer From the Depths”

Text: Jonah 1:17-2:10

Intro: I want to remind you now of what I said when I started this series. I will be preaching this book as historical fact, and not parable. I do believe that the events that we are reading about really did happen, and they are historical fact. I say that realizing that most of the world believes it be nothing more than nonsense, but I have no problem believing that the one who created all that we see, can direct a very large fish to swallow a man.

I read in John Phillips commentary that “Ignorant people have said that a whale could not swallow a man, but a giant whale that could have certainly swallowed a man is exhibited in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. It was captured off Knight’s Key, Florida, in 1912. The whale was 45 feet long, has a mouth 38 inches wide and weighed 30,000 pounds. It had a fish in its stomach at the time it was captured that weighed about 1500 pounds.

So today we will not spend this message trying to prove whether a fish can swallow a man or not, but we will take a look at the prayer of Jonah, and the dealings of God with his rebel preacher. There are some lessons to be learned here today from this famous passage of scripture.

1) The Timing of His Prayer (v.1)

- a. Isn’t it fascinating how we often use prayer as a last resort.
- b. Why did Jonah not repent and pray from the boat? Had he resigned himself to death?
- c. The text says, “Then Jonah prayed”. When has your then been? Or have you even had it yet?
- d. As Jonah battled against the storm that was much stronger than him, he then prayed.
- e. I believe this to be true, “The more stubborn you are, the harder it will be for you.”

2) The Truth about Affliction. (v.2& v.7)

- a. This is true for most all of us. It is affliction that births most of our prayers, and I assure you affliction will come to all of us.
- b. **Job 36:15** "God delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity."
- c. Bunyan "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart."
- d. Even when God is displeased with us, he never brings us into affliction merely for the sake of punishment. His purposes always include redemption.
- e. There is a [truth here that we should not miss](#). Jonah is in this situation by his own doing. Jonah is guilty.
- f. Some of you are in trouble right now precisely because of your disobedience. And if you are wondering, "Is there hope? Will God have mercy on me and hear my cry of distress?" take heart from Jonah. His distress was the fruit of his guilt, but God answered him and gave him another chance.
- g. **Psalm 107:10-15**: Some sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High [like Jonah] . . . Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress; he brought them out of darkness and gloom, and broke their bonds asunder. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to the sons of men!
- h. If your disobedience is the cause of your distress repent right now and cry out to the Lord. He answers in spite of your guilt.

3) The Decision Jonah Made (v.4,9)

- a. While Jonah was being overwhelmed with the waves and strangled by the seaweed, he was not thinking of himself, but set his eyes on God.
- b. He found true the scripture that said, "A very present help in time of trouble", to be true.
- c. He found God to be near and present when he cried out, in spite of the fact that he had been rebellious.

- d. Jonah was now seeing where his sinful pride, and his selfishness had taken him.
- e. When Jonah had reached the end of himself, and realized that he could not save himself, there was God.
- f. Jonah would wave the flag of surrender, and say I can't, but God you can.
- g. He would say not my will, but thy will be done.
- h. The belly of this fish at this moment was the most welcome place to Jonah in all of the world.
- i. Notice his words, With the voice of thanksgiving, and Salvation is of the Lord.
- j. It was Jonah's heart that needed to be in the right place, not his body.