

THE PRAYER OF JONAH (10F2)

Jonah 2:1-4

What role does prayer play in the will of God? Jonah was a selfish prophet, but he was also a man of prayer. He understood that when difficulties come there is only one place we can truly go for help. God continued to use Jonah, and Jonah continued to cry out to God.

Prayer is important. Here is an entire chapter devoted to prayer.

I. THE PLACE OF PRAYER (JONAH 2:1-2)

1. Was Jonah really in a big fish? Yes! Jesus said.

- i. *Matthew 12:40–41 (NKJV)* ⁴⁰ *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.* ⁴¹ *The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.*
- ii. “Is it possible to understand a reference like this on the non-historic theory of the book of Jonah? The future Judge is speaking words of solemn warning to those who shall hereafter stand convicted at his bar. ... And yet we are to suppose him to say that imaginary persons who at the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet repented in imagination, shall rise up in that day and condemn the actual impenitence of those his actual hearers.” —T. T. Perowne, *Obadiah and Jonah*

iii. Reverse sushi

2. **Where is your place of prayer? Daniel prayed in the lion's den. David prayed in a cave. Paul prayed in prison. Peter prayed above and below the water. You can pray anywhere!**

i. *Psalm 139:7–10 (NKJV)*⁷ *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.*

ii. *Matthew 14:23 (NKJV)*²³ *And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.*

iii. *Matthew 6:6 (NKJV)*⁶ *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

II. THE PAIN OF PRAYER (JONAH 2:2)

1. **We pray more when we are in pain.**

i. "His prayer was born out of affliction, not affection" - WW

ii. There are two words used in verse 2 for "cried" one is to call out, the other is to cry aloud or shout.

- iii. *Isaiah 58:9 (NKJV)⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness*
- iv. *Psalms 22:24 (NKJV)²⁴ For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.*
- v. "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." - John Bunyan

2. Prayer helps during our pain.

- i. More than half of the respondents to a nationwide poll conducted by ABC News, USA Today, and the Stanford University Medical Center said they use prayer against pain—90 percent said it “worked well” and 51 percent said it worked “very well.” Numerous other studies have come to similar conclusions, finding that people with chronic pain frequently rely on religious activities or beliefs, including prayer, to help them cope.
- ii. “Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.” – Max Lucado

III. THE PROVIDENCE OF PRAYER (JONAH 2:3)

1. God is in control of your life and circumstances. Pray according to His will.

- i. “To say that 'prayer changes things' is not as close to the truth as saying, 'prayer changes me and then I change things.' God has established things so that prayer, on the basis of redemption, changes the way a person looks at things.” - Oswald Chambers
- ii. “Prayer is aligning ourselves with the purposes of God.” - E. Stanley Jones

IV. THE PERSEVERANCE OF PRAYER (Jonah 2:4)

1. You feel like you been cast out of His sight. Keep looking to God. Keep praying!

- i. *Romans 12:12 (NLT)* ¹² *Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.*
- ii. “It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must patiently, believingly, continue in prayer until we obtain an answer; and further we have not only to continue in prayer unto the end, but we have also to believe that God does hear us, and will answer our prayers. Most frequently we fail in not continuing in prayer until the blessing is obtained, and in not expecting the blessing.” – George Müller

Growth Group Questions:

- We hear a lot about praying in a “prayer closet”. What does that mean to you? Where is the place you pray best?
- When we pray during pain our prayers are rawer and more authentic. Sometimes we say things out of anger and frustration to God. We may even accuse Him and say things that may be disrespectful. Do you think this is helpful? How much do you think we should “share” with God of what we are really thinking and struggling with?
- Oswald Chamber said, “To say that 'prayer changes things' is not as close to the truth as saying, 'prayer changes me and then I change things.'” What do you think he means by this? Do you believe that the statement, “prayer changes things” is also true?
- Let’s get personal. On a scale of 1-10 how good is your prayer life? What are some ways that you have found to make prayer a bigger part of your life? What about things that have minimized your prayer life?