The Sermon

Welcome

Good morning!
My Name is Pastor Jonathan
And I am so grateful that each of you are here today.
Everyone is welcome at Harvey!

Opening Illustration

Now, I love water…
I grew up in Mississippi swimming, canoeing, and tubing creeks and rivers…
Some summers it felt like we spent more time in the water than out of it.
So it may not look like it… but I'm a pretty strong swimmer… and I can hold my breath a long time underwater…
And our family loves to float the Comal River in New Braunfels…we haven't been in a couple of years, but we love to go do that…after the crowds have all gone back to school…
And if you've ever floated the Comal… you know about "the chute."
It's basically a water slide down the side of a waterfall… in the middle of an otherwise lazy river.
So a few years ago…the kids had their life jackets on… we went down once… and one of my kids wanted to go again.
So we trekked back up… to go down the chute again…
And this time… at the bottom… my tube flipped over…and I went under right where that waterfall is…
And I hadn't taken a good breath…

- And the current coming off that chute was pushing me straight down, no matter how hard I tried to swim up…
- And I could feel myself running out of air…
- And I remember having this moment of crazy clarity…
- I thouhgt…like…If I keep fighting to go UP… I'm going to drown.
- So I swam sideways… out of the current…
- And then came up gasping for air.

And I've thought about that moment a lot this week…

- Because I was only a few feet from calm water.
- I had a way out.
- But…in our story…Jonah didn't.
- There was no swimming sideways.

- There was no shoreline.
- It was just Jonah…sinking to the bottom of the sea…
- seaweed wrapped around his head…
- and the bars closing in.

All Jonah had left…was a cry.

- And it turns out… that was enough…
- Because of WHO heard it.

Transition

Last week, we finished ***Jonah Chapter 1***…

- And I told you about that kid in the huddle…
- The one who heard the play just fine…
- But then ran the opposite direction…

That was Jonah.

- He said all the right words… "I fear the LORD"…
- But he was running from the God he said he feared.

And while the pagan sailors:

- CALLED OUT to the LORD…
- FEARED the LORD…
- And WORSHIPPED the LORD…

The prophet of God went over the side of the boat…
Without ever saying a prayer.

And if you were coaching that kid…

- You'd bench him…
- Or maybe you'd cut him from the team…

But that's not what God does with Jonah.

So here's the question this morning:
IS IT EVER TOO LATE TO TURN BACK TO GOD?

And ***Jonah 2*** answers that question…

In fact, our big idea for today is this:

Big Idea

Salvation Belongs To The LORD.
God's not waiting for you to climb out; He's waiting for you to cry out.

Transition

So if you have a copy of God's Word today, turn to ***Jonah 2***, and we'll be in ***Chapter 2***, ***vs. 1-10*** today.
But I'm actually going begin by reading ***vs. 17 in Chapter 1***

I. The Lord's Appointed (Jonah 1:17)

> ***A Great Fish Swallows Jonah***
> ***17*** *And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

A. The Lord's Appointed (vs. 17)

So Jonah is overboard…
And the sailors are worshipping the God Jonah wouldn't even pray to…

And in the last verse of Chapter 1…in ***vs. 17***….
We catch another glimpse of the ***Sovereignty of God***…
- The text tells us that Jonah going overboard didn't catch God off guard…
- See God who ***RULES OVER*** all things…was ***RULING OVER*** exactly where Jonah would go overboard…

And so the ***text tells us*** that ***THE LORD APPOINTED A GREAT FISH TO SWALLOW UP JONAH!***

Like, think about that for a moment:
- The great fish, was in the right place, at the right time, exactly where Jonah went overboard and begin to sink….

Now, a lot of debate about this book…comes from the question of…***can a whale actually swallow a human***…***like, is this even possible….***
- So because of this, some have even said…this didn't really happen…this is just a fable…
- But I want to present two pieces of evidence for you this morning…

First, look at ***Matthew 12:40***

> ***40*** *For just 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.*

Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees and scribes here…***USED JONAH*** as a ***real-life example*** of the coming crucifixion.

- Jesus had not yet been buried and risen 3 days later…but the story of Jonah was well known.

So if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, references the future burial and resurrection here as a comparison to Jonah…
And if we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection as events that really occurred…***WHICH WE DO***…
Then we must understand that Jesus Himself is saying the events of Jonah really occurred!

The second piece of evidence I want to present to you is this: Genesis 1:1

> ***1*** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

The God we worship, created the heavens and the earth!

- That means everything we can see, touch, taste, or feel…God created it.

SO…If we believe God has the power to create everything out of nothing…
Then how can we say that God does not have the power to cause a great fish to swallow a man and sustain his life for 3 days and 3 nights?

So do I believe that Jonah was really swallowed up by a great fish?

- Absolutely!
- Can I explain it?….No…
- ***But my mind still can't even fully comprehend creation…So how can my mind fully comprehend The Creator?***

This is a true story….
But even greater than a story about a fish swallowing a man…
This is a story about the sovereignty of The Lord!

Notice who this verse is about…
… ***It's not about a fish***…
- It's about ***THE LORD WHO*** appointed…"

And that word "appointed"…
We're going to see it again over and over in this book…
- God appoints a plant…
- God appoints a worm…
- God appoints a wind…

And every time God appoints something…It obeys.
- The wind obeyed.
- The sea obeyed.
- The fish obeyed.

The only one in this whole book who refuses obey…is God's prophet, Jonah.

GOD APPOINTED A FISH, HIS CREATION, TO BE AT THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, FOR THE SALVATION OF ONE MAN, WHO MAY HAVE BEEN DONE WITH GOD…BUT GOD WASN'T DONE WITH HIM…OR THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH!

B. A Fish Of Mercy (vs. 17)

Now…when we read "that fish swallowed Jonah"…
- If we just stopped here…the fish would be the end of the story….

And in the OLD TESTAMENT…that word "swallow"…is usually a word used for destruction…
- For God's righteous judgment….

But…
- That fish wasn't ***God's judgment on*** Jonah.
- That fish was ***God's MERCY to*** Jonah.

The fish was God's rescue!

See, Jonah was drowning…
- Sinking to the bottom of the sea…
- ***And God sent a rescue boat…that just happened to have fins…***

Leslie Allen said it beautifully:

> *"The fish stands for the amazing grace of Yahweh, which came down to where he was and lifted him to new life."*

HEY FOR US TODAY:
Sometimes God's mercy doesn't look like mercy at first.
- Sometimes it looks like being swallowed up…
- Sometimes it's the very thing that stops you from running from God and causes you to turn back to Him….

Tim Keller calls the fish "***a severe mercy.***"
- It saved Jonah's life…
  - But it was still dark…
- It picked him up…
  - But it was still smelly and uncomfortable…

But it was mercy.
Because God wasn't done with Jonah!
And it's from inside that fish…
That we hear something we haven't heard in this book yet…
Let's keep reading in ***Chapter 2 vs. 1-7***…to see what that is…

II. A Prayer From The Bottom (Jonah 2:1–7)

Jonah's Prayer

> ***2:1*** *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 driven away*
> *from your sight;*

> *yet I shall again look*
> *upon your holy temple.'*
> ***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.*

A. Then Jonah Prayed (vs. 1–2)

Look at the first 3 words of chapter 2…
Then Jonah prayed…

Think about this…
- When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh… Jonah didn't pray.
- When Jonah went down to Joppa…Jonah didn't pray.
- When Jonah bought his ticket…Jonah didn't pray.
- When the storm hit…Jonah didn't pray.
- When the captain woke him up and said, "Arise, CALL OUT to your god!"…Jonah didn't pray.
- When the lot fell on him…Jonah didn't pray.
- When the sailors were crying out to the LORD…Jonah ***still*** didn't pray.

But now…
- When Jonah literally hits rock bottom…
- When he's being swallowed up by the sea…
- ***JONAH DECIDES…NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO PRAY…***

HEY CHRISTIAN:
Running from God and talking to God…don't tend to go hand in hand…

Often the first sign that we are running from God is that we quit praying to God….

And notice WHO Jonah prays to…
Jonah prayed to the LORD ***HIS God***
- Jonah prays to THE LORD ***WHO*** made a covenant with him.

AND Jonah had walked away from God…
- But God had never stopped being HIS God.

And look at what Jonah says in vs. 2:
- I called out to the LORD
- out of my distress
- and he answered me;
- I cried, and you heard my voice.

I want you to notice something here…

There are actually TWO prayers in this chapter:
1. The first is the prayer Jonah cried out when he was drowning…
- That's what he's remembering in ***vs. 2…***
- That was a desperate prayer…from the bottom of the sea.

2. And then there's the prayer he prays from INSIDE the fish…
- That's ***vs***. ***2–9***…
- And that's a prayer of ***THANKSGIVING***
- Because God already answered the first one!

How did God answer the first prayer?
With a rescuer…that just happened to be a fish….

So if you've ever wondered…
Why is Jonah thanking God when he's still stuck inside a fish?
- It's because Jonah finally understood…
- The fish was God's mercy on him…

Notice where Jonah says he was…
Out of the belly of ***SHEOL*** *I cried…*

Sheol is the Old Testament word for the place of the dead.
Jonah is saying…

- ***When I went into that sea….***
- I thought I was dead…

<u>But then Jonah said…I CALLED OUT TO THE LORD…AND HE HEARD AND ANSWERED ME!</u>

And I like to imagine in this moment…when Jonah is sinking deep into the sea with seaweed wrapped around his neck…
- This probably wasn't a very proper prayer…
- THOU O LORD…HEAREST ME!
- No, it probably sounded like ***LORD HELP ME, I'M DROWNIN'!***

Hey, I want you to know…
- Our prayers to God are simply conversations with The Creator.
- Sometimes they sound as simple as ***LORD HELP ME!***
- Sometimes we don't even know what to pray…and so it just sounds like ***GOD! I NEED YOU IN THIS MOMENT!***
- ***But what we see from Jonah here…is…***
  - It's never too late to ***CALL OUT TO THE LORD!…as long as you have breath…***
  - AND calling out to THE LORD doesn't have to look ***POLISHED…it's just gotta look desperate…***

I wonder…if to some degree…
- ***If we've lost our desperation for The Lord today…***
- Possibly because we've forgotten that ***WITHOUT HIM***…we're all just drowning at sea…

B. You Cast Me Into The Deep (vs. 3–6a)

L***ook at vs. 3…***

> ***3*** *For* ***YOU*** *cast me into the deep,*
> *into the heart of the seas,*

Hold up a second…
- Jonah says…***GOD CAST*** him into the sea…
- But didn't we read in ***Chapter 1*** that the sailors hurled him into the sea?
- And not only that…it was Jonah's idea!

But Jonah says…"GOD, YOU cast me…"
For the first time…in this story…
- Jonah understands….
- That the hand of God…
- Has been behind everything that's happened to him.
- And at the same time…he realizes it was all his own fault….

He doesn't accuse God of being unfair…
- There is no accusation against God's justice…
- Jonah knew that he went overboard…because of ***HIS SIN***…

And in this moment, instead of turning against God…
- Jonah was willing to turn on his own sinful self….
- Jonah knows he got exactly what his rebellion deserved.

AND HE REALIZED THAT THE FISH…THAT RESCUED HIM…WAS EXACTLY WHAT HE DIDN'T DESERVE!

In fact, Jonah says at the end o***f vs. 3***…
- It was ***YOUR BREAKERS***…
- It was ***YOUR WAVES***…
- ***THAT PASSED OVER ME…***

That sounds a whole lot like ***Psalm 42:7 where it says:***
7 Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.

Warren Wiersbe said that Jonah prays portions of up to ***30 Psalms*** in this passage…
- Now I didn't count them all up…but I know it's a lot
- And we certainly see ***Psalm 42:7*** very clearly in his prayer here…

BUT I WANT YOU TO NOTICE…
What comes out of his mouth when he is drowning in the deep…
Is God's Holy Word…

Look at vs. 4…

> ***4*** *Then I said, 'I am driven away*
> *from your sight;*
> *yet I shall again look*
> *upon your holy temple.'*

That phrase "***driven away***"…
- Is the same ***HEBREW WORD*** used in ***Genesis 3:24*** when ***God DROVE Adam and Eve*** out of the garden.

Jonah is saying he feels like an exile.
- Somebody who has been ***CAST OUT*** of God's presence.

But think about this…
Back in chapter 1… it was Jonah ***WHO FLED*** from the presence of the LORD.
Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord in His disobedience…

Alistair Begg made the point that *only someone who has known God's presence is frightened by losing it.*

AND NOW…Jonah says…"***I've been driven away.***"
You know…that's what sin does in each of our lives…
- It gets us to run from God…
- And then convinces us that God is the one who left us.

But ***vs. 4*** is not a hopeless verse…
This little word "***YET"***….
- Tells us that while Jonah was at the bottom of the sea…
- With waves passing over him…
- He is saying…I will meet with God again!

That's what Jonah means when he says he's ***looking towards God's Holy Temple***…
What he is saying is he is literally smelling and looking at a fish…that is God's forgiveness to a great sinner…

HEY FOR US TODAY:
That's still where we look when we're far from God.
Not a building…

But to the cross…
Where Jesus shed His blood for sinners like Jonah…and sinners like us.
We look toward the forgiveness of a Great God for great sinners such as us!

Hebrews 4:16 says:

> *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Just like Jonah…our ***HOPE*** is not in our circumstances…
Our hope is in the confidence we have in drawing near to the throne of grace through the blood of Jesus Christ!

Jonah continues in ***vs. 5–6***…

AND he paints this graphic picture…
- The water closing over him…
- Seaweed wrapped around his head…
- Sinking to the very bottom of the sea…

Like I can't imagine a scarier scene….

But I want you to notice something…
- God didn't send the fish the moment Jonah hit the water.

No…God let Jonah sink for a little while…
Perhaps God let him sink for a little while…so Jonah be ready for the salvation of The LORD through a smelly fish….
- Jonah went DOWN to Joppa…
- Jonah went DOWN into the ship…
- Jonah went DOWN into the inner part of the ship…
- Jonah was thrown DOWN into the sea…
- And now…Jonah says…"*I went DOWN to the land whose bars closed upon me forever…*"

Every step <u>DOWN</u> was a step away from God…
- And now Jonah quite literally hits rock bottom…
- I mean, "the bars closing in" is about as low as it can get…
- Surely…Jonah thought…

- "***This is how it ends***"…
- "This is the story of my life…"

Now…I love people's stories…
- Usually, when I meet people, I will ask them…tell me your story…
- Where you came from and how you got to where you are today…

And oftentimes the stories of Christians involve being at a rock bottom and then crying out to the Lord….

Why does God work in people's lives in that way?
Perhaps it's because only when we've hit rock bottom and start drowning do we ***REALLY*** begin to see reality clearly…
- Often at rock bottom we're stripped of pride or self-sufficiency, or any thought of "I can do this on our own"…
- ***AND*** our only hope at that point…
- ***IS to cry out to God and to fully rely upon Him…***

I wonder for us today…
- If it wouldn't be such a bad thing for us to be stripped of our self-sufficiency…
- Of our attitude of "I can do it on my own,"…
- And to be brought to a point where our only hope,
- Our only solution…
- is to ***CRY OUT TO THE LORD!***

C. Yet You Brought Up My Life (vs. 6b–7)

Look at the end of vs. 6…
We see that little word ***YET*** again…
- Jonah went down…
- ***YET….it was God WHO brought him up.***

This is the turning point for Jonah…
- Ever since we've been in Jonah…
- Jonah has been running from God…
- Jonah has gone down and now…is at rock bottom…
- ***YET….GOD REACHED DOWN AND BROUGHT HIM UP!***

Look at vs. 7…

Jonah says…MY LIFE WAS FAINTING AWAY!
AND HIS LAST THOUGHT IS THE LORD!

And not only that…
But Jonah says…***MY PRAYER CAME TO YOU!***

And I already told you…I don't think this was a very proper prayer…
- It probably sounded a lot like ***LORD I NEED YOU RIGHT NOW!***

But I also want you to notice…
- Jonah says…my prayer ***CAME TO YOU***…

Notice This:
Jonah didn't have to clean himself up first…
- He didn't have to find a way out of the water on his own…
- He didn't have to do all the right things before God heard Him…
- Quite literally is a man who has been running from God in disobedience…
- This is a man who has been prayerless…
- And he waits until ***HIS LIFE IS FAINTING AWAY***…
- ***REMEMBERED THE LORD…***
- ***PRAYED…***
- ***AND GOD HEARD HIS PRAYER!***

Richard Phillips put it this way:
"He had deserted God, but the very fact that he had not yet drowned proved that God had not deserted him."

HEY…*God's not waiting for you to climb out…*
GOD's waiting for you to cry out.

Let's keep reading to see how Jonah's prayer ends…in vs. 8-10

III. Salvation Belongs To THE LORD (Jonah 2:8-10)

> ***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!"*
>
> ***10*** *And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.*

A. Idols Can't Save (vs. 8-9)

Notice in vs. 8….

That phrase ***VAIN IDOLS***…

- This literally means ***VAPORS OF EMPTINESS***
- It's this image of, like, seeing your breath on a cold morning…
- Where you can see your breath…
- But you try to grab it…
- There's nothing there…

What Jonah is saying…

- Is that those who try to pay regard to idols…
- you're reaching for something that is nothing…
- And you're actually letting go of the one thing that can actually save you…
- ***The GOD of steadfast love who created the dry land and the seas!***

Jonah is saying ***IDOLS CAN PROMISE YOU EVERYTHING…***

- BUT WHEN YOU'RE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA…
- ***THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU OR HELP YOU***
- ***THEY CAN'T SAVE YOU!***

BUT THE GOD WHO CREATED ALL THINGS…CAN SAVE YOU WHEN YOU'RE DROWNING!

And Jonah says ***THOSE PEOPLE….***

- But the pagan sailors…like we saw last week…***CALLED OUT TO THE LORD!***
- ***THEY DROPPED THEIR IDOLS AND WORSHIPPED YAHWEH!***

So the irony is…

- Jonah thinks he's talking about them…
- But he's really talking about himself…

- Jonah's idol wasn't a statue…

JONAH'S IDOL WAS HIS NATION!

I heard a preacher say this week…
The worthless idol Jonah had been clinging to was patriotism…and while it's okay to be proud of your country, just don't make it into your god.…

See, Jonah had the literal idols of the pagans…
But he hadn't seen the more subtle idol in his own life.

Hey For Us Today:
It's always easier to see the idols in others' lives…
But the idols that usually do the most damage in our lives…
Are the ones we can't see when we look in the mirror….

I wonder in your life today…
- What is it that you're holding onto tighter than you're holding on to King Jesus?
- What is it in your life…that you say…Jesus, you can have everything…but ***NOT THIS ONE THING***….
- What is it that when you sing ***ALL TO JESUS I SURRENDER***… you're thinking…***yes***…but not this one thing…

IT MIGHT JUST BE THAT ONE THING…
- ***THAT LEADS YOU TO RUN FROM GOD…***
- ***WHILE YOU'RE CLINGING TO IT <u>TIGHTER</u> THAN JESUS CHRIST!***

For Jonah…
It took him going overboard and sinking into tsea before he cried out to the LORD…***WITH A VOICE OF THANKSGIVING…I WILL SACRIFICE TO YOU!***

It took Jonah going overboard….
- to finally end up where the pagan sailors already were…

- In ***Chapter 1 vs. 16…***after they saw the power of the LORD…they "offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows"….

It took Jonah going overboard..
- To really ***FEAR THE LORD…***
- ***NOT just say it!***

Leslie Allen said: "*Ironically Jonah is at last brought to the point the Gentile seamen have already reached.*"

And then Jonah says the words…that sum up this whole prayer… and really the whole book of Jonah…

Jonah says:

> *Salvation belongs to the LORD!"*

- ***Salvation doesn't belong to the sailors' gods.***
- Salvation doesn't belong to Jonah's words.
- Salvation doesn't belong to how hard you can row.

SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD!

Charles Spurgeon, preached a whole sermon on this one verse, said: "*Jonah learned this sentence of good theology in a strange college".*

And I want you to see the irony here…
- "***Salvation belongs to the LORD***" is the very message God called Jonah to take to Nineveh!
- Jonah is preaching to himself…the sermon he ***refused*** to preach to the people of Nineveh!

And while Jonah is preaching this now…
- In the weeks to come…we're going to find out if Jonah really believes this message…

Christian:
Salvation belongs to the LORD…

This means:

- ***You can't earn it…***
- ***And you can't lose it…***
- ***Because you can't lose what you never earned in the first place.***

In fact…***IF SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD…***
- Then those who are saved belong to Him too!
- And He holds us in His hands….

B. God Speaks And The Fish Obeys (vs. 10)

Look at vs. 10…and we'll be done with the text…

> ***10*** *And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.*

And the Bible doesn't give us the full extent of what happened inside that great fish…
- But we see that somewhere between Jonah's confession of ***SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD…and vs. 10…God has mercy on Jonah again!***
- ***See, that fish was not God's judgment… it was His mercy…***

But I just have to wonder…
- If I'm sitting inside the belly of a great fish for 3 days…
- At some point you've gotta wonder…
- Like…how does this thing end?

AND The Bible says…
- The fish threw up Jonah.
- Like…this isn't exactly the picture of a dignified landing….

Like, just picture Jonah on that beach…
- Covered in seaweed…
- Smelling like three days of fish…
- Like when I go fishing…it takes me washing my hands 10 times to get the smell off…can you imagine being inside a fish for three days!?

But I don't want you to miss this…
- God spoke ***ONE word*** to the fish…
- And the fish obeyed immediately.

God had appointed that fish…
- God appointed the wind…and the wind obeyed…
- God appointed the sea…and the sea obeyed…

And God appointed the great fish…and the fish obeyed…

Yet God called Jonah… and Jonah ***RAN***!!!
- God speaks once to a fish…And the fish does exactly what God says.
- It vomits Jonah out on dry land…

THE LORD, WHO MADE THE DRY LAND AND THE SEA…
- Rules over the great fish of the sea…
- And God, who made the dry land…places Jonah The Prophet right back on the dry land…

SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD.

Now… Jonah's story isn't finished.
Jonah's heart still has some work to do…
And we'll see that in the chapters to come…

But next week…
We pick up with some of the ***most hopeful words*** in the Bible:
"*Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time…*"

God wasn't done with Jonah.
And hear me…
God isn't done with you.

Transition
So is it ever too late to turn back to God?
- Not when salvation belongs to the LORD.

Because God's not waiting for you to climb out…
God's waiting for you to cry out.

So what does that look like for us today?

Applications

1. Cry Out To God From Wherever You Are

Some of you, as I've read this text today, are thinking…
I feel like Jonah…
- I'm drowning….
- I'm going under…
- I've got seaweed wrapped around my neck…

And some of you…you're there because you've been running FROM God…like Jonah was
- And if that's you…
- Hear me…
  - ***It is not too late.***
- ***You can cry out to God right where you are right now…***
  - ***You don't have to clean yourself up first…***
  - ***Just cry out to HIm***

But for some of you…you're in the deep and are drowning…and it's by no fault of your own…
- You've lost something or someone…
- You, or someone near you, has a sickness they didn't cause
- Or maybe you've had a betrayal you didn't deserve.

And if you are in Christ…
That storm…is not God punishing you.
- Jesus already bore the punishment.
- It may be an opportunity for you to see the sovereignty of the LORD!
- ***AND*** the same God who heard Jonah…***hears your cries too!***.

Psalm 130:1–2 says:
1 *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!*
2 *O Lord, hear my voice!*
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

TODAY, IF YOU'RE DROWNING…
- Whether you got there by running from God…
- Or the waves just came crashing in…by no fault of your own….

Don't wait until your life is fading away…to CALL OUT TO the LORD.

H. B. Charles said it this way:
"*Don't make God corner you, before you return to him.*"

Wherever you may be…
- Don't suffer in silence…
- Don't try to hold it all together on your own…
- Don't try to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps…
- ***CALL OUT TO THE LORD!***

Because just like Jonah…GOD HEARS YOUR CRIES!

2. Fill Your Heart Before You Hit The Bottom

Remember what came out of Jonah's mouth at the bottom of the sea?
- Scripture….

Line after line…
- ***Scripture he had prayed and sung in worship…***
- ***Came pouring out of his mouth on his worst day….***

Jonah didn't have time to go look something up.
- There's no Bible app at the bottom of the sea.
- There was no Googling a verse for his situation…
- All he had…was what he had already hidden in his heart…

HEY I WONDER FOR US TODAY….
What's going to come out of OUR mouth when we hit rock bottom?
…It's probably whatever you're filling your heart with right now…

See…each of us…in some way…are preparing for our worst day on Earth…and for our best day in eternity.

Psalm 119:11 says:
> ***11*** *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

Christian…hide God's Word in your heart…
- So on your worst day here on Earth…
- You know and remember where your hope is…

And you can sing and live out…
"*On Christ the solid Rock I stand…all other ground is sinking sand!*"

And Christian…hide God's Word in your heart…
- So you're getting to know God more and more…
- Because on your best day in eternity…which is every day in Heaven…
- You'll be worshipping the One you've been singing and studying about all along.

So here's my challenge for you this week…
Pick a Psalm…
- Read it…meditate on it…and maybe even memorize it…

One of the easiest ways for me to hide God's Word in my heart is through songs…
- I love Shane & Shane's albums Psalms, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2…
- It's literally just straight scripture set to music….

Maybe for you…it's just reading it over and over…
- But let's make a practice of hiding God's Word in our hearts…
- For our worst day on Earth…
- And for an eternity of best days in Heaven!

But let's fill our hearts with God's Word before we hit rock bottom!

3. Call On The God Who Saves

Maybe you're in here today…
- And you've heard Jonah's story…
- And you realize there's never been a point in your life where you've called out to The Lord for Salvation…
- Maybe you've never recognized that Salvation belongs to The LORD…and you've been trying to do it all on your own…

Today, I want to share with you the GOOD NEWS from God's WORD:

God is Holy.
- God created all things…the heavens and the earth…the sea and the dry land.

- God alone is perfect.
- He can do nothing wrong, and He is the definition of Holiness.

Humans are Sinful.

- ***Romans 3:23*** tells us… "***all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***"
- Every one of us…like Jonah…has run from God.

This creates a problem

- Our sin separates us from God…
- And left on our own…
- We would sink to the bottom…
- Behind bars that close forever.
- The storm we deserve…is the storm of God's righteous wrath against our sin…
- And no amount of good works…can outrun that storm…

Jesus is the answer

- But yet…Jesus said…"something greater than Jonah is here."
- Jonah went into the deep because of HIS OWN sin…
- Jesus went into the deep because of OURS.
- Jonah felt "driven away from God's sight"…
- Jesus actually cried out on the cross… "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"
- Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights
- Jesus was really buried in the ground for three days…

But on the third day…

- Jesus really rose from the dead…
- Defeating sin and death forever.
- So today, you don't have to stay at the bottom.

Romans 10:13 says:

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- Everyone who CALLS…
- Not everyone who climbs…
- Not everyone who cleans themselves up first…
- Everyone who CALLS.

Just like Jonah called out from the deep…

- You can call out to Jesus today.
- If you will turn from your sin…
- Believe that Jesus died for you and rose again…
- Confess Him as your Lord and Savior…and follow Him.

You CAN AND WILL be saved!

Not because you finally got your life together…
But because SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD.

HEY Today,
I don't know where you're at…
But I want to tell you the truth…
- Salvation belongs to THE LORD…
- ***God's waiting for you to call out to Him!***

Would you do that today?
- ***Whether you need to cry out for salvation…***
- ***or you just feel like you're drowning…***

Come see me, Kendall or Grant, or any of our church members…
AND we would love to help you cry out to The LORD.

Hey Christian:
- If God has rescued you…
- Then do what Jonah did…
- Give thanks…
- And go tell somebody about Him this week…

Big Idea

Salvation Belongs To The LORD.
God's not waiting for you to climb out; He's waiting for you to cry out.

Church, I love you!
Let's Pray!