

May 28, 2017

TIME OF REFLECTION

“You cannot hope and also think about hoping at the same moment; for in hope we look to hope’s object and we interrupt this by (so to speak) turning around to look at the hope itself... Introspection is in one respect misleading. In introspection we try to look inside ourselves and see what is going on. But nearly everything that was going on a moment before is stopped by the very act of our turning to look at it. Unfortunately this does not mean that introspection finds nothing. On the contrary, it finds precisely what is left behind by the suspension of all our normal activities; and what is left behind is mainly mental images and physical sensations. The great error is to mistake this mere sediment or track or byproduct for the activities themselves.”

~C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

And my heart is black as coal
It’s been mined and there ain’t no gold
It’s so dark in there, but I don’t care
I will lay down in this empty hole
Where my heart is black as coal

And oh, there is nowhere left to go from here
I have fallen past the last frontier
But at the bottom of this well I hear you breathing

Love below me
Love around me
Love above me
Love has found me
Love has found me here

~Andrew Peterson, “The Last Frontier”

“Despair is for people who know, beyond any doubt, what the future is going to bring. Nobody is in that position. So despair is not only a kind of sin, theologically, but also a simple mistake, because nobody actually knows. In that sense there is always hope.”

~Patrick Curry, *Defending Middle-Earth: Tolkien: Myth and Modernity*

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Hope of Jonah” – *Ryan Bouton*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Selections from Jonah (ESV)*

Chapter 1

¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” ³But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. ⁶So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

⁷And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” ⁹And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew

that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

¹¹Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” ¹³Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴Therefore they called out to the LORD, “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” ¹⁵So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

¹⁷And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Chapter 2

¹Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ²saying...

⁸“Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.

⁹But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

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