

Ministry From Jonah 01

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our need for salvation and turning to the loving Savior, who offers eternal life through his sacrifice.

Duration: 9:19

Scripture: Jonah 1:1-4, Jonah 1:9, Jonah 2:2, Jonah 2:9, Jonah 3:1-2

Topics: "Salvation By Grace", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jonah from the Old Testament. Jonah, a prophet, is given a message by God to deliver to the people of Nineveh, but instead, he tries to run away from God's presence. God sends a storm to bring Jonah back to Him, and the sailors on the ship Jonah is on try to find the cause of the storm. Jonah confesses his disobedience and the sailors throw him overboard to calm the storm. Through this experience, Jonah learns that salvation is not earned through good behavior but is a gift from God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing that salvation is by grace through faith and cannot be obtained through our own efforts.

Transcript

There's a very well-known Bible story found among the less-known minor prophets of the Old Testament that I call to your attention. It's the story of Jonah. The record of his life is summed up in four short chapters that can be read in a few minutes.

Jonah was a prophet, and as such, a great responsibility was resting upon his shoulders. Prophets are men to whom God reveals his purposes, and they are expected to carry out God's instructions. But we must ever keep in mind that prophets are still only men.

Sometimes they are disobedient, and the first chapter of Jonah describes a disobedient prophet. God spoke to Jonah, giving to him a message to present to the people of Nineveh, a great Gentile city far to the northeast in the land of Assyria. It was one of the greatest cities of the old times, but as is often the case of big cities, Nineveh was an exceeding wicked city.

God spoke to the prophet Jonah, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me. Jonah knew that the preaching of judgment would be an unwanted, unwelcome message, for men do not like to be reminded of their sins, and the announcement that punishment will follow is the last thing that men want to hear. As then, so now, the preacher who will dare

to remind men and women that judgment is coming will never be a popular man, but rather a despised man.

The men of Jonah's day were just like the men of today, so he rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord. He hurried to Joppa, a seaport city. There he found a ship ready to sail to a far country.

Of course he had to pay the fare, perhaps a one-way ticket, and he wasn't able to use all of that. This business of running away from the Lord is rather expensive. You have to pay a lot of fares, and you usually don't arrive where you intend to arrive.

Like many runaways, Jonah went down into the sides of the ship as soon as he got on board. His body was tired and exhausted, for running away from God takes a heavy toll even from the body. Much of the weariness that men endure is caused by attempting to get away from the voice of God.

While Jonah is sleeping, God has not forgotten him, nor did he intend to have the messenger fail. A storm is sent by divine interposition. Waves run high.

The sailors who have weathered many former storms are all trembling. They are praying to their idols for help. It's a case where God causes circumstances to reach a fleeing man.

He still uses circumstances to bring unsaved persons to Christ. He may allow storms to come into the personal life, perhaps ill health. Sometimes he allows the storm to come into the home life in order to get the hearts of the Christ neglecters to pay attention.

In this case, the sailors try to remedy the precarious situation by tossing some of the cargo overboard, but it seems as though all human maneuvers fail. At last, the master of the ship awakens the sleeping Jonah and demands that he must pray to his God. The sailors are suspicious that there is some definite cause for the unusual fierce storm, and they cast lots.

Jonah's sin is found out. At once they overwhelm him with questions, trying to find a reason for the tempest. Jonah tells all who he is and how he is trying to run away from the presence of the Lord.

His plans are spoiled and he is exposed. I may have someone in my listening audience who is right now at the very place we find Jonah. You have been doing a pretty good job of running away from the voice of God, from the tender pleadings of the Savior, but finally your strategy has come to an end.

It's about time to give up and tell the truth. The stormy sea you have encountered recently you have brought upon yourself, and there's nothing left but to confess that you can't run away from God much longer. It would be good if this very hour you would confess to God, I'm guilty, I'm wrong, I'm lost, I need to be saved.

That's where God loves to meet men when they come to the end of themselves. That's where God met Jonah. He is through.

At his own request he is cast into the sea. He is utterly helpless, and that's where God steps in to display the riches of his grace. Jonah deserves nothing.

He should pay in a watery grave for his deliberate disobedience, but God seems to see in this moment an opportune time to be gracious. A number of things happen at once. The wind ceases, the sea is calm, and the sailors offer a sacrifice to Jonah's God.

The Lord sent the storm to accomplish a definite purpose, to bring Jonah to his knees in confession. After that purpose is accomplished, the adverse circumstances are no longer needed, but God begins to deal in grace. He prepared a great fish to take care of Jonah, and he who prepared the great fish had perfect control, and he steered that great submarine right to the dry land.

Just as Jonah's life was sacrificed for the safety and deliverance of the sailors, so the life of the Lord Jesus Christ was forfeited on Calvary's rugged cross. He laid down his life in order to procure eternal life for undeserving sinners. He had no sins of his own, but he voluntarily died for your sins and mine.

As God in grace prepared a great fish to become Jonah's Savior, so in infinite grace he has prepared a great Savior to meet us at the point of our extremity. That's where I found him, and that's where you will have to meet him. All who have already been delivered love to sing, I was sinking deep in sin far from the peaceful shore, very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more.

But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry, and from the waters lifted me. Now safe am I. Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves. He will lift you by his love out of the angry wave.

He's the Master of the sea, billows his will obey. He, your Savior, wants to be besaved today. If you are still unsaved, God puts you in the place of responsibility.

He offers a full and a free salvation, and it's up to you to receive or to reject that offer. He will force no one to be saved, he simply offers to do it. And all who are wise will receive that salvation and begin to love and serve the Savior.

Don't miss this greatest of all opportunities, for there will come a day when no salvation will be offered. Your begging for mercy will then be in vain. Jonah learned a very important lesson through this experience.

He learned that salvation from start to finish is of the Lord. Salvation cannot be obtained through good behavior. It is not of works lest any man should boast.

It is always by grace through faith. Have you learned this all-important truth, that you cannot earn God's salvation? It is not a reward, but rather a gift that must be received. Salvation is of the Lord.

God thought it, the Savior bought it, the Spirit taught it, and since it's from God from start to finish, the redeemed in heaven will ascribe their worship and praise altogether to the Son of God who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood. How sad would be the story of Jonah if he had not been rescued. Such will be your sad history if you will not trust the patient Savior who stands ready to receive guilty sinners.

I trust you will recognize this very hour that you are running away from God, that God is offering to you something that is for your eternal blessing, and because you are running away from Him, you are bringing misery to yourself and to your friends. I trust you will do as Jonah did. You will confess that you are wrong, that you will turn to the loving Savior who is ready to receive you, that you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thus become the possessor of everlasting life.

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