

Jonah 1:5-15

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[0:00] You guys grab your Bibles. Jonah chapter 1. We're going to start reading in verse 1. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.

But 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 on board to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

But 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. Then 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. So 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. And they said to one another, Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.

[1:12] So they cast lots, and a lot fell on Jonah. Then 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? And 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. Then 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. Then 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.

He 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. Nevertheless, the men rode hard to get back to dry land, but they could not.

For the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore they called out to the Lord, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood.

[2:15] For you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you. So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

Last week we talked about repentance, and how God's mission is dependent on him, and him alone. So Jonah's mission was to go to the land of Nineveh, the great city of Nineveh, and preach to them because their evil had come up against the Lord.

Maybe today your mission is to repent of unbelief, or unfaithfulness, or idolatry. What I failed to talk about though last week was why God calls us to repentance.

Why does God call us, make us do something that is difficult? What is the reason for God? Why should we turn from our sins that a lot of times are enjoyable?

Why would God make us do something difficult? The answer is that God loves his children.

[3:33] God loves his children and has called us to be holy. For his word says, be holy as I am holy. God showed his love to Jonah by not allowing him to finish his journey to Tarshish.

Which he went on in complete disobedience. See, what we and what Jonah says to God is, surely God, you love me too much.

You love me too much to make me go do something that my spirit or my conviction just doesn't agree with. Surely God, you love me too much to make me do that.

But God says to us, I love you too much to not make you go do that. I love you too much to not make you holy.

To not make you repent or push you to repentance. God loves us too much to let us run in sin. He loves us too much to let us bathe in it.

[4 : 44] To let us wallow in our idolatry. He loves us too much. He loved us in creation. Because in creation we were created to worship him.

Because he alone is better and worthy of all praise. In the book of Jonah, God loves Jonah. God loves the sailors.

God loves the city of Nineveh. And he shows it by not allowing them to continue in sin. And he shows us the same love today, doesn't he?

If we're children of God, you cannot continue in sin. You're going to mess up. We're going to mess up. But you cannot continue in sin. You can't.

The Holy Spirit will not allow. Matthew 5, the Beatitudes. Jesus said, Blessed are those who mourn. For they will be comforted.

[5 : 45] This isn't the sissy kind of crying all the time and being real emotional and in touch with your emotions. It's brokenness over your sin and the sin that is around you.

We're broken over what we've done. And next week in chapter 2, we'll see Jonah's prayer.

We'll see his repentance. We'll see his brokenness over what he has done. The brokenness is the beginning of repentance. The Spirit will not allow us to continue in sin.

Here in the book of Jonah, God hurls a storm at Jonah. Like a man throwing a spear. God hurls this storm at Jonah to stop him where he's at to bring him back to what God had commanded him to do. And the ultimate way that God shows us love, of course, we all know is through Christ Jesus.

[6 : 49] Through the death and resurrection and life of Christ. And here in Jonah chapter 1, God provides salvation to the sailors.

Physically and as we'll see, spiritually. So God's salvation is our topic this morning. Salvation is an act of the sovereign God.

Creator of the universe. The one who controls the sea and calms the storm. And those who seek salvation in morality, in religion, or in self will die.

Only salvation by God leads to life. And I can stand up here and I can say with full assurance. That what is spoken from up here.

Nathan, me, anybody on Thursday night is not original. The message is not original. It is timely, maybe. But everything has already been said.

[7 : 53] So when I speak of salvation, don't close your ears. Don't shut down. Because we have to hear what God has done. We have to be reminded about what he's done. And we have a story here that shows us God's love through salvation.

We must never get bored talking about God's work and his salvation. So I have two points this morning.

And the first one is salvation is an act of the sovereign God. Salvation is an act of the sovereign God.

God is pretty basic, pretty elementary. But it's a truth we have to grasp. Before we dig in, I want to point out to you some of the events that have taken place where God has used and been in control of to bring the sailors and bring Jonah to the point at the end of chapter one.

First of all, clearly, we know the story. Jonah disobeys God. He goes the exact opposite of where God tells him to go.

[9 : 02] And when I say opposite, I mean, it's not I'm not exaggerating. It is the opposite. Even opposite in direction. And so God hurls a storm at him to bring him back.

You know, it kind of reminds me of Joseph. And when he's talking to his brothers in chapter 50 of Genesis, where he said, you meant this as evil, but God meant it as good so that I would save many.

And Jonah may have said in his own words, you know, I messed up. I screwed up. I meant this as evil. But lo and behold, God, you've you've meant it for good because, look, the sailors, I mean, you save them physically.

And in verse 16, you save them spiritually. And. Wow, God, I. I can't believe you use my disobedience like that. So we got we got Jonah's disobedience.

We have pagan sailors casting lots to see whose fault it is. Now, what you what you have when they cast lots is not like a bunch of rocks. And then they try to read the rocks.

[10:13] It's usually like two rocks, two stones, pebbles. And they're painted on both sides with some sort of color. And they would throw them down. They would they would pick a person. And so Andy, we would say, OK, Andy, is it Andy's fault?

And we would throw two rocks down. And if it was two dark colors up, then the answer would be no. But if it was two light colors, the answer would be yes.

So we would say, OK, it's Andy's fault. And then if it was a black and a white or a light and a dark. We'd have to throw the stones again to figure it out. And this isn't the first time that that God has used casting lots.

I mean, Proverbs 16, 33 says the lot is cast into the lap. But it's every decision is from the Lord. Every decision is from the Lord. If I asked you each individual person how you came to know the Lord, if I said, tell me your story.

What is your salvation story? Most of the stories in here would be different. There'd be something different about it. It could be, you know, one event or events that brought you to salvation.

[11:28] It could be a book or books. It could be a one conversation or many. But each story is different in detail. But but hear me not in substance.

It's all the same in substance. And for here in the book of Jonah. In the sailors, God used events. That led to fear. To move them to salvation. OK, you got the progression. God used events in fear to move them to salvation physically and as we'll see spiritually.

So look at verse five of chapter one. We have the sailors fear of the storm. Then 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.

The sailors feared the situation. They feared for their lives. And I just wondering how many near death experiences have you have you heard or stories of where God used to redeem a person, to save a person?

[12:44] They're out there. Plane crash, car crash, whatever. Shark attack. Maybe there's someone here who who has a story like the sailors.

I'm not saying you're in a ship in the sea and a big wind out of the middle of nowhere comes in. But, you know, God has has rocked your world with some something. And this is what we have.

The sailors thought that death was inevitable. They started throwing out all their supplies. They went from from this is a great ride to we're going to die.

And the only way that they felt like they were going to survive was. Their instincts and let's start throwing things out. Verse nine.

So the verse five, they were they were afraid of the. They were afraid of the storm. Verse nine, Jonah says to says that he fears the Lord. And I was stuck on this verse for most of the week.

[13:59] This verse just kept rolling in my head. I don't understand how he can say this. And yet his actions are completely opposite of this. Look at verse nine. Verse eight, they ask him, who is he?

Where? What have you done? In the middle of this raging storm. And he says to them, I am a Hebrew and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

I just get it. What is God trying to say to us? When we clearly see from the events before this, Jonah does not fear the Lord.

And I think I finally figured it out. And it's simple. I probably should have. I probably shouldn't admit that I didn't figure it out. My question to you is, is how many in this room say that they believe in God, but do not live like it?

How many of you pull out your family of God membership card and say the right things and read off of it?

[15:11] What you're supposed to say and in reality live a life that is contradictory to this. And that's basically what Jonah, he's like, he pulls out his family of Israel, Jewish Hebrew membership card.

And on the back, it tells him exactly what to say. And so he reads, I am a Hebrew and I fear the Lord, God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. But his actions don't line up with what he's saying.

This this fear. Is the fear of reverence. Same Hebrew word is not afraid of circumstances, afraid of worship of God, of Yahweh.

I think we all have lived. We all say we believe in God.

We all say we're Christians or or most of us in this room. And. But we've at some point in our lives, we've lived contradictory to that. At some point.

[16:13] For example, we'll say God's sovereign. He's in control of everything. He's the creator of the universe. He placed me here. The air that I breathe is a gift from him above.

But I don't think he knows all my secrets. I really should have. I really should do this. So that then I can have this out.

Or God is good, but. What the heck is going on? I can't seem to catch a break. Surely God is not good because all these events in my life have been horrible.

Or God's thoughts are not our own. That's what we like to throw that around a lot as Christians. God's thoughts are not our own. If you really believe that, why are you saying, God, I really, really, really, really, really need to know why she broke up with me.

I don't. I don't get it. Or I really, really, really need that car or that iPod or that iPhone or fill in the old anything. This was Jonah here.

[17:28] He feared the Lord. He said he feared the Lord, but he did not. And as I said last week, he gets a really bad rap. Because we have one event in Jonah's life and he looks like an idiot.

But here we have the bad part of the bad choice in his life. So what is God trying to teach us? So we have Jonah saying that he fears the Lord.

Verse 10. Then in a result of him saying that I fear the Lord, the sailors go. Then the men were exceedingly afraid to say, 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. Now, this isn't them saying, dude, tell me what you did. I got to know. Like, did you kill somebody? Did you like what? What did you do? This is what have you done? We're going to die because of you. Like, how could you have run from God? Even the pagan sailors knew that he did something a little odd.

[18:38] They knew he did not make the one wise his choice. And so we have we have the sailors here coming around to seeing who God is.

We have the sailors going. Well, if he's a God, if he's a Hebrew and he fears the Lord, the God of creation, a land and sea, then.

And this storm came out of came out of nowhere abruptly and and it's sailing season and storms really aren't supposed to occur kind of like this.

Then maybe this God is for real. Then then we're really going to this man. Isn't that how God works, though?

That we have to come to a place where we know who God is. We have to acknowledge that he exists. We have to know and see who he is before.

[19:46] He works. He reveals himself to us. Before anything else. And for the sailors, it was a storm.

It was a storm that did it. It was a disobedient missionary and it was a storm that showed the sailors who God was. For you, it could be could have been anything.

And it may need to be something. The bottom line is that is that we come to a knowledge of who God is by him revealing it to us.

And here, God, using the events and the circumstances, he's revealed himself to us, even through the words of a disobedient missionary.

The sailors got it. They knew who they were who they were dealing with. The verse 16 is the last use of the word fear.

[20:54] And theologians and commentaries that I've read say that these sailors. They got saved, as we say in the Baptist church. They got it right.

They dropped their pagan worship. They dropped their idols. And they worshipped the Lord Yahweh. The God who provides.

The God who is creator. They came to a saving knowledge of God. So this fear is the same fear that Jonah spoke.

But their actions line up with what verse 16 is saying. It is one of reverence and worship.

The men feared the Lord exceedingly. And they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

Now, think back to the beginning of this story.

[21:54] They threw all their supplies overboard. It says they got rid of everything to lighten the load. So, chances are they couldn't have made the sacrifice on the boat.

So they had to contemplate and consider and get to land. And then they're going to make their sacrifice. And then they make this vow. And what I'm getting at is it's not just this. God, you saved us.

Thank you. Now I'll go on and live my life. This was. They made a commitment. And the author adds exceedingly to show us that the men feared the Lord exceedingly.

That there's this commitment here. There's this fervor for who God is. And who they feared. The interesting thing here is that their salvation spiritually came after their physical salvation of God ceasing the storm immediately.

And why that's interesting is we've all heard of guys in prison and they have like this jailhouse salvation where, God, if I get out early, I'm really going to live for you.

[23 : 11] And so while they're in jail, they're reading their Bibles and they're committed to what God is doing. They're attending Bible study and doing all this outward thing, kind of like our Lethia Way skit.

But. But. I've seen it enough. They get out of jail and they're back to what they were doing. It was just their ticket out, so to speak.

It wasn't any any real conversion. And here God has already saved them. So their salvation led to worship.

God saving them on the sea led them to to worship. So God used the sea. He is the storm. He is the lots that they cast and he used fear to get the sailors attention so that they would know the creator.

So God is sovereign. God is sovereign. He is in control and his salvation. His salvation is for him alone to give. And he chose to give it to pagan sailors.

[24 : 21] Even in the midst of chasing down a disobedient missionary named Jonah. The next point. The second point is those who seek salvation in morality.

Religion or self. Will die. But salvation from God. Gives life. Those who seek salvation in morality. Religion.

And self. Will die. But salvation from God. Gives life. I think of Romans 8. 13. It says, If you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the spirit you put the death, the deeds of the body, you will live. So if you live according to the flesh, if you do the things that please yourself, that please what's inside of you, if you try to achieve things and if you live for that, you will die.

Morality. Morality. Morality. Religion. Self. But if by the spirit. But if by the spirit, meaning if God reveals himself, if God works.

[25 : 29] You put the death, the deeds of the body. You will live. In Jonah chapter 1, we have all three. Morality. Religion. And self.

And we have morality. Trying to be good people. The sailors saying, no, we can't throw this guy overboard. We have religion. The sailors calling Jonah.

Waking him up and saying, pray to your God that he might save us. Who knows? We have Jonah pulling out his membership card and reading it off.

And then we have, of course, self where Jonah says, I don't agree with that, God. Nineveh? That's a tough crowd. I'm not going to go that way.

All three do not lead to salvation. And, of course, we're reading this story. And if you guys haven't seen it yet, this is a great analogy of God's salvation.

[26 : 32] This whole story. Just chapter 1 by itself. Jonah having to be sacrificed for the sailors so that they could live.

The storm immediately ending. Of course, Jonah can't save anyone. It's not because Jonah said, throw me overboard, then you'll be saved.

It's because God chose to cease the storm because of Jonah. Verse 6.

The captain comes down 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.

But the funny thing here is what the captain says to Jonah mirrors what God said to Jonah at the beginning of chapter 1. Arise, go.

[27 : 34] The captain says, arise, call out to your God. I heard somebody preach on this. And he said, I bet Jonah felt like he was in a nightmare.

He's sleeping good under the boat, wherever he's at, in a deep sleep. And then all of a sudden, here's the exact same command coming from a voice right next to him. Probably nudging him or punching him.

Get up, you fool. We're about to die. I thought, this is crazy. How could... This is nuts. Arise and call out to your God.

In other words, be religious. We're about to die. Pray to your God that maybe he'll save us. Go to church. Church. You laugh.

You chuckle, but... That's how our brain works. If I do good things, if I do great things for God, then he'll be pleased and then he'll bless.

[28 : 46] If I just pray to God, he'll save us from whatever, from this storm, whatever that may be. If I just serve at church, God will save me from blank.

If I just read my Bible, God will save me from blank. That is a lie straight from hell.

God doesn't bless because of you. He doesn't bless you because of what you've done. And he blesses you because of him. Through Jesus Christ.

And because he chooses to. That is a self-centered, self-worshipping, God-minimizing worship of yourself. And it does not lead to salvation. If I can do this for God, then he'll surely do this.

Garbage. And in reality, in Christ, God has already blessed you. You can even measure. He's already done it. This is why grace is so important to the gospel.

[29 : 57] Ephesians. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is a gift of God. Not a result of works so that no one can boast.

This isn't just a verse we say because it sounds good. This isn't a verse that we say because I've memorized it. This is a verse that we say because it is the cornerstone of the gospel.

God's grace on you. Unmerited favor. Favor. On you and on me. Religious activity.

Nothing. Praying to a God. Call out to your God. Perhaps the God will give thought to us that we may not perish.

Does not get you anywhere. Verse. As I've already talked about, we have Jonah's membership card. We have Hebrew.

[31 : 01] This is what I'm supposed to say. This is my religious activity here today. I'm a Hebrew. The Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land. What a great truth.

If his actions back that up. But this is just. Just talk. Does he believe what he says? Or is he just falling back on his religious background?

And we have this in church today. Not necessarily here, but. I was baptized at age three. Yeah.

I'm God's. My daughter is three and I'm pretty sure she doesn't quite get it. Shot me. Handgun.

We know that Jonah didn't believe. We know. We know that he did not believe. What he is saying here. Because if you remember last week in Hebrew, the word believe is always connected with obedience.

[32 : 12] So if we believe something, we act it out. Jonah's not acting it out. Jonah.

Jonah could have thought all he needed was to be part of the chosen people. Those thoughts that all he needed was to be religious. All he needed was to say the right thing.

None of that saves. Christian, if you think that they do. Then I called you by the wrong name.

Acting as if you're part of the elect. You're part of the chosen people. You can live however. If you practice religious activities, then you can live however you want.

You can do whatever you want to do. You say the right things. You can live and choose whatever you want. Romans. So we continue in sin so that grace may abound.

[33 : 18] By no means. Turn to Matthew chapter 7. And stay in Matthew because we'll be in chapter 12 in just a few minutes.

Matthew chapter 7. It's a good example. A good example. A good example of from the Bible of people who do good things.

But don't know God. Verse 21 through 23. Not everyone.

This is Jesus speaking. And how do we know that? It's in red, right? Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. The will of my father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And cast out demons in your name? And do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you.

[34 : 21] Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. They did great things, guys. Prophecy.

Preach. Cast out demons. Mighty works. And it led to nothing. In verse 11 through 13, back in Jonah, you guys can stay in Matthew.

Unless you want to turn back. We have the pagan sailors showing their morality or even nobility almost, being very noble. You know, Jonah tells them that I'm a Hebrew.

And they flip out and go, we're going to die. This is not good. And then they say to him, what shall we do? What do we have to do?

Just tell us. And Jonah says, throw me into the sea. Now, even in the end, the storm has progressed.

[35 : 25] It says it's getting worse and worse. Even in the end, Jonah is being disobedient. Now, this is a little bit of speculation, but he could have said, turn back to Joppa.

It's my fault. Nineveh. We'll get back. I'm sorry I wasted your time. I'll give you some money. We'll get back. And then you guys can start your journey again. But he still didn't want to go to Nineveh.

Jonah said, throw me into the sea. End my life. Still disobedient. And the sailors say, no way.

No man left behind. We're going to make it. So what do they do? They try to row back to get to land and the storm picks up even worse. God was not going to allow them to be saved for any work.

He wasn't going to. It was going to have to come from God. And I'm pretty sure that a man being thrown in the ocean isn't the special or in the sea isn't the special ingredient that calms all storms.

[36 : 41] I'm pretty certain. So, I mean, you science guys can tell me otherwise, but it's not. OK, thank you. Thank you, James. So Jonah being thrown overboard and the sea ceases is an act of God.

God was not going to allow them to be saved from any works of their own. Verse 14 and 15 back in Jonah.

It's funny that the sailors, they're about to throw this guy overboard. They know we have nothing else we can do. We've tried to get the land. We've tried to do all these things. We've lightened the load.

And they say, all right, God, your will be done. Oh, by the way, let this man's life be not on us.

We're doing as you planned. Let us not be guilty for this guy. And then they kind of put the guilt on God at the end of 14. For you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.

[37 : 51] Morality, nobility, whatever, being noble. Doesn't get you anywhere. Just like religion doesn't get you anywhere. Being good doesn't cut it.

They throw Jonah into the sea. And just like that, the raging stops. Just like that, the sea calms. Kind of reminds me of Jesus. When he speaks and says, peace be still. And the sea just... Jonah was thrown overboard.

And the sea stopped. God saved them because a man was sacrificed. God saved them because a man died. Sound familiar? Matthew 12.

If you guys are still in Matthew, turn to Matthew 12. If you're not, turn to Matthew 12. Verse 40 and 41. And this is what I referenced last week of Jesus talking about Jonah.

[38 : 58] And because Jesus spoke about Jonah and said that it happened, this book is pretty important. Verse 40 and 41 of chapter 12.

In Matthew. 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.

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Again, letters in red so we know Jesus is writing. Jesus says something greater than Jonah is here. Present tense, here. And of course, he's talking about himself.

He's talking about, I am here. Jonah died for a few days. First of all, he's in disobedience. I'm going to die for many in obedience.

[40 : 05] Jesus, out of obedience, sacrificed his life for many. Jonah, out of disobedience, sacrificed his life for the sailors. But not, not for Nineveh.

Jesus lived for the glory of the Father. Jonah, in this story, lived for the glory of himself. What I desire, I'm going to do. I don't desire for them to be shown mercy, and I'm not going to do it.

Jesus calmed the storm. Jonah spoke and nothing happened. Jonah had to go swimming. Jesus died for those who would trust him.

God, through Jesus, saved the sailors physically and spiritually for his glory. Salvation is from God, by God, and for God.

Let's pray.