

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
12-3-18

Jonah 2

¹ From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ² He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. ³ You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ⁴ I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' ⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit. ⁷ "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered You, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. ⁸ "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. ⁹ But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'" ¹⁰ And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

2:1-10 This is a prayer of thanksgiving, not a prayer for deliverance. Jonah was simply thankful that he had not drowned. He was delivered in a most spectacular way and was overwhelmed that he had escaped certain death. Even from inside the fish, Jonah's prayer was heard by God. We can pray anywhere and at any time, and God will hear us. Your sin is never too great and your predicament never too difficult for God.

2:1-7 Jonah said, "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD" (2:7). Often we act the same way. When life is going well, we tend to take God for granted; but when we lose hope, we cry out to him. This kind of relationship with God can result only in an inconsistent, up-and-down spiritual life. A consistent, daily commitment to God promotes a solid relationship with him. Look to God during both the good and bad times, and you will have a stronger spiritual life.

2:2 Jonah pictured his predicament in the belly of the fish as though he had been buried alive.

2:8 Those who worship false gods and worthless idols forfeit God's grace and abandon any hope for mercy from the Lord. Any object of our devotion that replaces God is a lying vanity. We deceive ourselves with something that is ultimately empty and foolish. Make sure that nothing takes God's rightful place in your life.

2:9 Obviously Jonah was not in a position to bargain with God. Instead, he simply thanked God for saving his life. Our troubles should cause us to cling tightly to God, not attempt to bargain our way out of the pain. We can thank and praise God for what he has already done for us, and for his love and mercy.

2:9 It took a miracle of deliverance to get Jonah to do as God had commanded. As a prophet, Jonah was obligated to obey God's word, but he had tried to escape his responsibilities. At this time, he pledged to fulfill his vows. Jonah's story began with a tragedy, but a greater tragedy would have happened if God had allowed him to keep running. When you know God wants you to do something, don't run. God may not stop you as he did Jonah.

Jonah 3

Jonah Goes to Nineveh - Verses 1-10

1Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: **2** "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." **3** Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. **4** Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." **5** The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. **6** When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. **7** This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. **8** But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. **9** Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."**10** When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

3:1-2 Jonah had run away from God but was given a second chance to participate in God's work. You may feel as though you are disqualified from serving God because of past mistakes. But serving God is not an earned position—no one qualifies for God's service. But God still asks us to carry out his work. You may yet have another chance.

3:1-2 Jonah was to preach only what God told him—a message of doom to one of the most powerful cities in the world. This was not the most desirable assignment, but those who bring God's word to others should not let social pressures or fear of people dictate their words. They are called to preach God's message and his truth, no matter how unpopular it may be.

3:3 Nineveh was a huge city. The Hebrew text makes no distinction between the city proper (the walls of which were only about eight miles in circumference, accommodating a population of about 175,000 persons) and the administrative district of Nineveh, which was about 30 to 60 miles across.

3:4-9 God's word is for everyone. Despite the wickedness of the Ninevite people, they were open to God's message and repented immediately. If we simply proclaim what we know about God, we may be surprised at how many people will listen.

3:10 The pagan people of Nineveh believed Jonah's message and repented. What a miraculous effect God's words had on those evil people! Their repentance stood in stark contrast to Israel's stubbornness. The people of Israel had heard many messages from the prophets, but they had refused to repent. The people of Nineveh only needed to hear God's message once. Jesus said that at the judgment, the people of Nineveh will stand up to condemn the Israelites for their failure to repent (Matthew 12:39-41). It is not our hearing God's word that pleases him, but our responding obediently to it.

3:10 God responded in mercy by canceling his threatened punishment. God had said that any nation on which he had pronounced judgment would be saved if its people repented (Jeremiah 18:7-8). God forgave Nineveh, just as he had forgiven Jonah. The purpose of God's judgment is correction, not revenge. He is always ready to show compassion to anyone willing to seek him.