

JONAH



June 14, 2020

Jonah's Prayer

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for being a God who answers when we cry out to you. But like Jonah, too often we wait until we hit rock bottom before we call out to you. Lord, draw us close to you and give us a desire to speak with you in good times and in bad. Help us to have a more meaningful prayer life. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Jonah 1:1-4, 9-10, 12, 15-17

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.

INTRODUCTION

Jonah was running from God when he found himself in the worst possible place – the belly of a large fish. After hitting rock bottom Jonah cries out to God in prayer. Do you regularly communicate with God or does it take hitting rock bottom to reach out to God? What can we learn about communicating with God from Jonah's prayer?

Whether you are on top of the world, or whether you are in the depths of hell, when you call on the Lord, He will answer you. The answer may not be what you want, but he loves you and will answer you. Like Jonah, our first step back to God is to surrender to His will and obey. And like Jonah, we will find peace in our circumstances when we realize that it is by the Grace of God that we are saved.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Read Jonah's prayer on page 1. Why is prayer often our last resort? Share one or two words that would best describe how you view prayer? On a scale of 1-10, rate your prayer life. What would make your prayer life more meaningful?
- 2) Jonah says "In my distress I called to the Lord." Jonah hit rock bottom before he cried out to God. On a scale of 1-10, what level of distress do you have to reach before you cry out to God? What do you think Jonah learned about God through his experience? What have you learned about God in times of distress?
- 3) Read Jonah 2:8. What are some worthless idols we can cling to instead of putting our hope in God? Describe some ways we forfeit the grace of God when we trust in idols? What idols do you need to give up? How is God currently pursuing you with His lovingkindness?
- 4) Salvation comes from the Lord!" In what ways do you think Jonah's deliverance by God changed him? Why do we often return to our old ways once the danger is past? Would you rather God save you from an outward circumstance or from an inward struggle with sin?
- 5) Prayer should not be about getting God to do what we want. Instead, effective prayer is our coming into agreement with what He wants. How can we keep the focus of our prayers on God's will? What is your biggest prayer need? Take plenty of time to pray for each other.