

Prayer Out Of The Depth – Jonah 2.1-10

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ² saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. ³ For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. ⁴ Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’ ⁵ The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head ⁶ at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. ⁷ When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. ⁸ Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. ⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” ¹⁰ And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land (Jonah 2.1-10, ESV).¹

Memory Verse: Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ² saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. (Jonah 2.1-2, ESV)

Jonah is now in the belly of a great fish, he might feel like all is lost, but for him, he is probably satisfied because now he does not have to go to Nineveh. Feeling that soon he will be dead, he just goes along in the belly of this fish, but soon he understands he is not dying and so he does the only thing one can do in a situation like this pray.

We have all been in the ‘belly of a great fish’ of some kind, the question is how did you react to your fish situation and what happened to get you out of it? For Jonah he began to pray to God, the very thing we must do not only when we are in trouble but all the time. We must build a habit of praying to our Heavenly Father.

There are three good reasons why we should pray; first because Christ commanded us to. In Matthew chapter 6 He said to the disciples, “And when you pray” (Matthew 6.5), fully expecting all of His followers would be engaged in prayer as part of their daily lives. He also used the parable of the Persistent widow in Luke 18.1-8 as a reason to teach His disciples how ‘men always ought to pray and not lose heart.’ Paul urges us to “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5.17), and James reminds us, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4.8, KJV).² God fully expects His children to pray to Him.

Second, “we pray as Christians because it is necessary and needful. We may not understand everything about the mechanics of prayer, since there is an element of mystery about it, and it raises some perplexing questions, but nevertheless we feel the inward urge to do it. We feel the need and even the urgency at times, to ‘come near’ to God as James says. That is because our soul and spirit cannot do without it, any more than our body can go without food.”³

Finally, we pray because “we are actually strengthening God’s hand, as it were, in the warfare against the forces of evil and darkness in the world. Speaking of this Paul says: ‘For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.’ (2 Corinthians 10:4). The strongholds he has in mind are those of Satan in the world, and the prayers of believers are one of the mighty weapons in the arsenal of God for their destruction. William Cowper expresses the

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Jon 2:1–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jas 4:8). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³ Williams, P. (2003). *Jonah—Running From God: An Expository Commentary* (p. 46). Epsom, Surrey: DayOne.

same thought: ‘Satan trembles when he sees, The weakest saint upon his knees’.⁴

Prayer must be part of our lives, but for many of us it is not, or it is only done when we are in some type of trouble. We have many excuses to why we will not pray—do not know what to say, people will make fun of me, I do not pray well, I do not like to pray in public, or I am shy. But these are nothing more than excuses to not do what God has called us to do, pray. Now He never said, “You must pray in public” but He has asked us to pray. So, the question is, “when was the last time you prayed?”

Jonah is praying in the deeps of his trouble, he has no where else to go, nothing else to do, no one else to talk to. Therefore, he can do only one thing, pray to his Heavenly Father and tell Him how he feels about the situation he is in.

Jonah called out to God from his distress (vs. 2), because God cast him into the sea, and drove him from His sight (vs. 3-4). Jonah said, yet I am looking to Your temple, even though it looked like my life was over, You brought me back from the pit because You are God (vs. 4-6).

When my life was almost gone, oh Lord I remembered You, and I prayed to Your holy temple. People who pray to idols do so in vain, and will never find hope for they have given up because they are not praying to You God of the Heavens (vs. 7-9).

However, I will praise You with my voice, and offer a praise of thanksgiving as a sacrifice to You. All I have said I would do I will do for You oh Lord, because Salvation belongs to You and You alone (vs. 9).

Jonah was broken, taken to a very low point, so he would understand who God was and who Jonah was. We do not want to get to this point but sometimes we get ourselves into the same place as Jonah, we run, we disobey, we think we know better, and God has to come get us, and bring us back to the beginning and say, “Now do what I asked you to do in the first place.”

This is where Jonah is, God has brought him back to the beginning, the place He wanted him to go, the city where he asked him to minister, Nineveh. “Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land” (Jonah 2.10, HCSB).⁵ We always have a choice, obey, or disobey, but remember we could be like Jonah and be vomited up by a fish.

Application

1. What is your number one reason for not praying? Explain the situation.
2. When was the last time you prayed? What was it for? Were you in trouble? How was your prayer answered? Please explain.
3. **Deeper Thinking:** Read Matthew 6.9-13 and explain what Jesus was trying to teach the disciples and how does this passage apply to us today?
4. Commit to memory Jonah 2.1-2 and seek ways to share the gospel at school this week.

Prayer

Our Father Who Art In Heaven, Hallow Be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Father You are great and greatly to be praised, You have created all things for Your glory and honor, without You nothing was made that has been made. Lord I thank You for Your Son who came and died for me. What a wonderful sacrifice, one He did not have to make, but without it I could not have the Living Hope of eternal life with You. Thank You for Your Loving Kindness, Mercy and Grace which knows no bounds. Lord I ask You to help me to continue to seek You daily, to serve You in every circumstance without question or fear and to share Your gospel with others. In Your Son Jesus Christ’s Name I pray, Amen.

⁴ Ibid., (p. 47).

⁵ [The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version](#). (2009). (Jon 2:10). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.