

Welcome: We would like to welcome you here today for our worship service with our theme today **“In Your Mercy Lord, You Heard My Cry”** and our text today is Jonah 2:1-9. This is message eight in our series **“Trials of the Prophets.”** “Note” the messages each week are also available on the sermon player on our web page www.lightofchristwi.org.

Sermon Outline

1. What is God telling you in the context?

2. What are you hearing from the story, what verses stand out to you?

3. What is Jesus doing in your life right now as you respond to the message?

4. How is Jesus challenging you as you listened to today’s message?

5. What do you believe Jesus wants you to do this week?

KEY THOUGHTS FROM THE MESSAGE

1. **In his mercy, the Lord pursues us even when we are disobedient.** Has the Lord every pursued you when you were disobedient and if so how did that affect you? I believe we are honest with ourselves we can identify with Jonah because we are much like him. Our journey of faith for most of us has not been a smooth one, and we would not be here today if it were not for the Lord mercy and his willingness to pursue us and to lead us to the cross so we could come to faith in Jesus. Romans 2:4 says...*Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*
2. **The Lord often uses great distress in our life to soften our heart so that we begin to look up and cry to the Him for help because there are no other options.** Maybe this happened in your life where you became so desperate the Lord could finally break through to your hardened heart. Many times, the Lord has to strip things away from our life before we are receptive to receiving his love and begin to call out to the Lord in desperate prayer for that is the way of man. In chapter one Jonah is running from the presence of God and now in Jonah 2:4 it says, *4 Then I said, 'O Lord, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.*
3. Time or age does not make us any better. Consider that time does nothing but pass away. **Time will only come and go and it is only how we use time that matters.**
4. As a believer how will you respond to what the Lord has rescued you from? **“What has the Lord rescued you to do” and how will that affect those around you?”** *Jesus tells*

us in Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

**Message 10 / Series: The Trials of the Prophets / Theme: Jonah’s Prayer / Jonah chapter 2 /
Developed by Pastor Tom Graves Light of Christ Church**

1. Open with prayer
2. Review the guidelines below
3. **Note: Tell the people that as you tell the story to put yourself into the story...be Jonah.**
4. Tell the story orally
5. Rebuild the story
6. Read the story
7. Go to the questions of the heart



TARGET

We want the participants to understand why they are here and to lay a foundation of the guidelines for small group’s discussions. It is helpful to go over these guidelines briefly every time your huddle meets.

SMALL GROUP / HUDDLE GUIDELINES

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing with one another. Below are some guidelines that will help create a safe environment:

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let’s value one another during the discussion by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO “CROSS TALK”: Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, point to Jesus. Don’t try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

“I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church,” “us” “we”, etc.

LISTEN TO THE STORY: When the story is being presented the most effective way to understand the story at this point is just listen...don’t try to follow along in your bible. Opening the Bill will come later.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others)

- If someone sins against you
 - Matthew 18:15-20
- Restoring someone in sin:
 - Galatians 6:1-5
- Forgive a sinner:
 - Colossians 3:12-13
- Reconciling differences
 - Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5

Message 10 / Series: The Trials of the Prophets / Theme: Jonah’s Prayer / Jonah chapter 2 / Developed by Pastor Tom Graves Light of Christ Church

Jonah Flees From the Lord

1 ¹ The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

⁴ Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish.”

⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

⁹ He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried to the Lord, “O Lord, please do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O Lord, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

¹⁷ But the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

1. *Jonah’s Prayer*

2 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 the depths of the grave I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the deep,
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 brought my life up from the pit,
O Lord my God.

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
forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
- 9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving,
will sacrifice to you.
What I have vowed I will make good.
Salvation comes from the Lord.”
- 10 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

[The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Jon 1:1–2:10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Questions of the Heart

1. I want to go back to the context of our story which is Jonah chapter one. In the opening chapter of our story Jonah is running from the face of God (he is turning his back on God) yet the Lord pursues him sending a great storm upon the sea that Jonah is traveling on.
 - a. What does this tell us about the Lord that he pursues us when we have turned our back on him instead of just letting us go?
 - b. Has the Lord ever pursued you when you were disobedient? How did that affect you?
 - c. Is the Lord pursuing you now?
2. In Jonah one the Lord is pursuing Jonah when his actions could affect the repentance of the people in Nineveh. What does this tell us about the importance of free will in the Kingdom of God verses making everyone a robot?
 - a. Why does the Lord want us to love him and obey him out of our own free will?
3. Jonah does not like the people from Assyria so he is running from God. How can prejudice affect our compassion on others?
4. Jonah is so upset with God about saving the people of Nineveh that I believe it begins to cloud his judgment...your brain is not processing correctly which leads to a rash decision...just throw me overboard and the sea will become calm vs Lord I have sinned and I will now go to Nineveh.
 - a. If we are very upset about a situation what is best thing we can do before making rash decisions.
 - b. How can the Lord help us in those situations?
5. In our story:
 - a. In God’s mercy for the people of Nineveh the Lord sends word to Jonah...go preach against their sin.
 - b. In God’s mercy, he sends a storm upon the ship Jonah is traveling on...to get his attention.
 - c. In God’s mercy, the ship does not break up.
 - d. In God’s mercy when Jonah is thrown overboard he is swallowed by a great fish.

- i. What do we learn about God's mercy?
 - ii. How has the Lord shown you mercy in your life?
 - iii. How can we thank the Lord of his mercy?
6. What is going on with Jonah that in chapter 2 verse one he finally prays to God? Why did he not pray earlier? How has the Lord prompted you to come to him in prayer?
7. How can distress make us more willing to pray to the Lord about the situation we are in?
 - a. Share a time when stress really got you to start thinking about the Lord.
8. Inside the fish, Jonah has some time to think...how can that be a helpful experience...that is a time to think?
9. Verse four Jonah says...I have been banished from your sight and earlier in Jonah one he was running from the face of God. What changed that Jonah now values being in the presence of God? How can calamity show us what is important in life? Have you ever had a time where the Lord used a situation to bring clarity to the importance of a relationship with him?
10. What do we learn about the Lord in verse 6...*But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God.*
 - a. How has the Lord brought you up from the pit?
11. Jonah in verse 7...when my life was ebbing away I remembered you. What does this tell us about Jonah? What does this tell us about man in general when we must be in this degree of distress before we cry out to the Lord? Share a time when distress caused you to cry out to the Lord for help?
12. What does Jonah mean in verse 8 when he says...those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
13. Read verse Jonah 2:9...what begins to take place in the heart of Jonah? How has the Lord changed your heart along your journey of faith?
14. Verse 10...the Lord commands the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land...where he was for three days and three nights. (Reference Matthew 12:40) What did Jonah learn in those three days?
15. How are we like Jonah?

Application and accountability

1. What is our theme for our message this today?
2. As you reflect on this story what is the Lord telling you that you need to do or maybe change in your life? Why is that a challenge for you? How can we hold you accountable to accomplish what the Lord wants you to do?
3. Who do you think needs to hear this story?

Close with prayer