

Sermon Notes

“Jonah: Pursued by the Hound of heaven”
Jonah 1:17 - 2:10 — “Saved”

November 11, 2007

A. Introduction

- 1. why was God ‘hounding’ Jonah?
- 2. what is kind of story is Jonah?
- 3. what is the nature of Jonah chapter 2?

B. Prepared Salvation 1:17-2:1

- 1. God P_____ for Jonah’s D_____ 1:17a
- 2. God P_____ Jonah’s further F_____ 1:17b
- 3. God P_____ Jonah to P_____ 2:1

C. Prayer of Salvations 2:2-9

- 1. Jonah’s P_____ 2:2
 - a. it was occasioned by his S_____ (2:2a)
 - b. it recognized his L_____ C_____ (2:2b)
 - c. what people and prayer does God always answer?

2. Jonah’s P_____ 2:3-6

- a. it suited God’s P_____ (2:3a)
- b. it suited Jonah’s P_____ P_____ (2:3b-4a)
- c. it brought P_____ to Jonah (2:4b)
- d. it was without P_____ (2:5-6a)
- e. it demonstrated God’s P_____ (2:6b)

3. Jonah’s P_____ 2:7-9

- a. it acknowledged his D_____ (2:7a)
- b. it D_____ him to God (2:7b)
- c. it showed him the D_____ of any other way (2:8)
- d. it was D_____ by fruit meet for repentance (2:9)

D. Perfected Salvation 2:10

- 1. for Jonah it was completed when ...
- 2. for God’s people it is completed when ...

E. Application: how do I respond and value the salvation prepared by God for me in Christ Jesus?

—{1}. **Jonah (1:17 &) 2** **“Saved”**

A. Introduction

1. The passage we have just read has occasioned fun of various kinds over the years
 - a. interactive children’s sermons are fraught with danger —{2}.
 - (A) one pastor told this story of Jonah and quoted from what we just read: “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. ... And he said: ‘I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, *And You* heard my voice.’ ... So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land*.” (NKJV)
 - (B) finishing the quotation, the pastor involved the children with the question, “What does the fish vomiting Jonah out on dry land indicate to us today?”
 - (C) One youngsters, with great enthusiasm so that all the congregation could hear spoke up: “It proves that even a fish can’t stomach a bad preacher!”
 - b. and one pastor, entitled his sermon, ‘You Can’t Keep a Good Man Down’ —{3}.
 - c. but we shall learn things deeper than these light-hearted thoughts this morning – matters of eternal significance

2. This series of messages is entitled, ‘Jonah: Pursued by the Hound of Heaven.’
 - a. last week we explained the origin of this title from Francis Thompson’s poem, ‘The Hound of Heaven’
 - (A) We should emphasize that in using this picture of God, we are not viewing His hunting as for the purpose of destroying, but rather one of searching in order that to rescue – save – His quarry, Jonah
 - b. Jonah is not a fish story
 - (A) in fact, the fish only gets 3 verses!
 - (B) even those are not about the fish but about God
 - c. no, Jonah is a story of God’s grace
 - (A) God’s grace is shown in the way that He ...
 - (1) ... pursues Jonah, His runaway prophet
 - (2) ... makes His salvation known to mankind

(B) as salvation has been the theme of our worship time, so it is the theme and title of our message today: "Saved"

3. first, let us briefly review Chapter 1

- a. God commanded his prophet, Jonah, to go to Nineveh and to preach against that great city's great wickedness
- b. bu Jonah
 - (A) took flight
 - (B) instead o heading to Nineveh
 - (C) he headed in the exact opposite direction
 - (1) fleeing from God by boat
 - (2) fleeing to Tarshish in Spain, the end of the earth
- c. But God pursued Jonah relentlessly
 - (A) first by the storm
 - (B) then by the sailors
 - (C) and finally by Jonah's own spiritual senses
- d. God used Jonah despite himself in the turning of the pagan sailors to trust and worship of Yahweh God – but Jonah was not there to be blessed by their conversion
- e. we left chapter 1 with the sailors praying & praising, and in chapter 2 we find Jonah is praying & praising

4. your testimony as a believer is a power tool to bring others to faith in God

- a. the man blind from birth in John 9 had an irrefutable argument when "He then answered, 'Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.'" (John 9:25) ^{4}.
- b. More than once it is recorded In the book of Acts of Paul the apostle testifying how he, Saul of Tarsus, was saved by his Lord Jesus Christ
- c. and, Jonah writes this book as a testimony to a saving God – the God who had intervened to save himself

5. let us look at this passage under the following headings:

- a. Prepared Salvation – God prepared for Jonah's salvation

- b. Prayer of Salvation – Jonah brought to place of prayer
- c. Perfected Salvation – salvation brought to a completion
- d. and each of these speak to an aspect of the salvation that is to be found through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

B. Prepared Salvation 1:17–2:1

1. In these verses we discover God had already prepared for this
 - a. He provided for Jonah’s deliverance from the briny deep
 - b. He prevented Jonah’s further flight from Himself
 - c. He prompted Jonah to prayer

2. It provided deliverance from the depths of the sea 1:17a
 - a. **But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah ... (NIV)**
 - b. this story has been much disputed by unbelievers using the statement that the throat of any whale or fish is too small to admit the body of a person and there have been similar incidents related, which are refuted, such as the ... **British seaman named James Bartley, age 21. Thrown into sea while hunting a sperm whale near Falkland Islands in 1891. He disappeared. Just before nightfall the dying whale came up. Its blubber was cut off, stomach removed. Men noticed the stomach was moving. They cut into stomach to find unconscious Bartley. In a coma for two weeks. After a month he was able to tell of being thrown in the air, seeing great mouth open up and swallowing. He had been inside the stomach for 15 hours. His hair fell out and his skin was bleached white. He lived 18 more years.** ⁻⁽⁵⁾.
 - c. now the O.T. word is ‘fish’; the Greek word used in the N.T. can be translated ‘**whale, any sea-monster, huge fish**’ but neither Hebrew nor Greek words are zoologically specific terms; but if we descend into arguments as to just what species this was, or find a similar historical incident, we miss the real point:

(A) « God prepared this animal to bring salvation to Jonah »
 - d. so, people will argue about Jesus Christ – they will fasten upon any controversial item and use it to distract the discussion away from the real point:

(A) « God sent His Son into the world that people be saved »

3. It prevented Jonah’s further flight 1:17b

- a. "... and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights." (NIV)
- b. now once Jonah was in the fish his salvation was ensured
 - (A) his life was sustained by the life of his submarine boat
 - (B) he was sheltered from the deadly sea by this creature
 - (C) and he was kept alive in that place by God's power
 - (D) he was not going to return to the sea or flight – God had taken him into His own hands
- c. Jesus said concerning those who come to Him for salvation "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand." (John 10:27-29)
- d. when God saves us He converts us; He turns our flight from being away from Himself to being toward Himself

4. It prompted Jonah to pray

2:1

- a. "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,"
- b. It's called a prayer ... but it also a thanksgiving
 - (A) Jonah isn't looking forward to being saved
 - (B) Jonah is thanking God – from the very stomach of the fish – that he now is saved!
 - (C) now, it doesn't look like he is saved
 - (1) he carries with him all mess and wet of the sea
 - (2) this place is not much of restaurant
 - (3) but he has been delivered and gives thanks
 - (4) this was a most natural reaction – Walter Wyatt, Jr., a pilot, was lost and finally ditched his plane into the sea where he spent many hours, being harassed by sharks, until the coast guard cutter Cape York dropped the ladder and he climbed on board, fell to his knees and kissed the deck. ^{-{6}}.
- c. similarly, the one who has found salvation in Jesus Christ is moved to prayer, to thanksgiving, to the coming to God, addressing Him as 'Father' and making our requests of Him
- d. so, let's look at Jonah's ...

- C. Prayer of Salvation 2:2–9
1. Jonah’s Plea 2:2
- a. Jonah’s plea grew out of his situation and his condition
- b. It was occasioned by his situation 2:2a
- (A) “and he said, ‘I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. ...”
- (1) what Jonah is now praying in thanksgiving
- (2) continues what he before prayed in terror
- (B) his situation was distress; he was in dire straits
- (C) the sea below him; the sea above him; the sea around him; turn any which way, just the sea
- (D) and he called to the LORD
- c. It recognized his lost condition 2:2b
- (A) “... I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.”
- (B) Sheol is the Hebrew word which represents the various states associated with death, and, depending upon the context, can be rendered ‘grave, death, the place of departed spirits of man, or, hell’
- (1) Jonah was as good as dead, and as bad as if in the place of eternal punishment
- (2) and from this, he cried for help
- (C) it is the recognition of our lost condition – realizing the terrible reality and burden of sin in our lives – that will drive us to the cross for forgiveness, for salvation
- d. Jonah was heard ... the prayer for salvation from the man or woman calling on God is the first and foremost prayer that God will answer for anyone who prays it
- (A) Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:32 NAS)
- (B) in Psalm 107 we read “Because they had rebelled against the words of God And spurned the counsel of the Most High. Therefore He humbled their heart with labour; They stumbled and there was none to help. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses.” (vv 11-13 NAS)
- (C) God does not wait until we are righteous to answer our prayer for salvation, but waits for us to call upon Him

2. Jonah’s Predicament

2:3–6

a. Predicament ... it suited God's plans

2:3a

(A) "For You had cast me into the deep ..."

(B) Jonah recognizes that

(1) though it was the hand of the sailors that threw him overboard into the heaving sea

(2) it was the hand of God that made this to happen

(3) God's plans for Jonah were not to be thwarted by Jonah's disobedience and flight from God

(C) If you are a believer, one of God's children, have you ever looked back on how you came to know Christ?

(1) at the people God used

(2) at the events God brought into your life

(3) chasing, herding, corralling you into His fold?

b. Predicament ... it suited Jonah's prior purpose

2:3b-4a

(A) "For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. ...'"

(B) now, here is a bit of irony!

(1) Jonah had fled from the presence of the Lord

(2) well, now he has fully achieved it

(3) and, he discovers that his own desires and wishes

(a) his own plans

(b) his own purposes

(4) are not so great after all

(C) God gives Jonah a taste of these to make Jonah think

(D) In pursuing those He seeks to bring to Himself, God may allow us to have, for a time, the things we desire so that we may discover the real answer is in Him

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord

But, ah! the waters failed!

E'en as I stooped to drink they'd fled,

And mocked me as I wailed. ^{-{7}}

c. Predicament ... it brought prudence to Jonah

2:4b

(A) "... Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple."

- (B) fleeing from God's presence he turns to the temple, the place in the O.T. appointed by God for His presence
- (C) so, the sinner, who has fled from God, must turn to that greater Temple, the Person of the Incarnate Son of God, to Jesus Christ, because "... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself..." (2 Corinthians 5:19)
- d. Predicament ... it was without precedent 2:5-6a
 - (A) "Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. "I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars *was* around me forever, ..."
 - (B) We mentioned this last week, but here again is this truth: God is not hesitant to use His almighty power to bring His people to Himself
 - (1) God the Son was willing to go to the cross
 - (2) God the Holy Spirit dwells in God's children to reprove, to rebuke, to return them to Himself
- e. Predicament ... it demonstrated God's power 2:6b
 - (A) "... But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God."
 - (B) the term 'pit' is used in the OT as a synonym for Sheol
 - (1) the place where the dead are buried – the grave
 - (2) the place of departed spirits
 - (3) the place of punishment
 - (4) the place beyond all further help
 - (5) in Dante's poem, Inferno, above hell's gate are the words – 'All abandon hope, ye who enter here!'
 - (C) it certainly looked as if Jonah was beyond all help
 - (1) overtaken by God's pursuit as he fled God
 - (2) cast overboard into the stormy depths of the sea
 - (D) But God 'specializes in things thought impossible!'
 - (1) He did it with Jonah, the great fish, and saved him
 - (2) He did it in Christ Jesus in His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension to the Father's right hand, so that Paul exclaims "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians

- 3. Jonah's Penitence 2:7-9
 - a. It acknowledged his desperation 2:7a
 - (A) "While I was fainting away, ..."
 - (B) sin had brought Jonah to the depths and now he confesses and recognizes its horrible reality: it had divested him of all power to do anything for himself
 - b. It directed him to God 2:7b
 - (A) "... I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple."
 - (B) but instead, he turns to God
 - c. It showed him the deficiency of any other way 2:8
 - (A) "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs." (NIV)
 - (B) "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 NAS)
 - d. It was demonstrated by fruit meet for repentance 2:9
 - (A) "But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD.'"
 - (B) Zacchaeus repented, desiring to right his wrongdoings
 - (C) John the Baptist chastised the religious rulers for their mock repentance, repentance without restitution
 - (D) Jonah shows the reality of his repentance, not mere words spoken in desperation, but a life change shown in obedience to God
 - e. those who come to Jesus Christ for salvation, are called to do so with repentance: recognition of our sin, turning away from that sin, turning to God: not merely in saying, "I'm sorry God" but living a resurrected life in Jesus Christ

D. Perfected Salvation 2:10

1. "Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land."

2. Salvation for Jonah

- a. was first deliverance from death in the sea
 - (A) but it was a restrictive type of deliverance
 - (B) inside the belly of a fish
 - b. but this was not God's ultimate purpose for Jonah
 - (A) living out his existence as a kind of Captain Nemo
 - (B) but rather, that he should return to real living
3. the salvation which we know in Jesus Christ
- a. leaves us in this world – a world that is anti-God
 - b. leaves us with our human frailties and weaknesses of our flesh, as we walk a pilgrim pathway with God
 - c. this is but preparatory to the completion, the perfection, the consummation of our salvation when Christ returns: "However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—" (1 Corinthians 2:9 NIV)

E. Conclusion

- 1. Do not treat salvation as
 - a. something philosophical, to be contemplated as an idea
 - b. something historical, which you once received
 - c. something theological, to be debated
- 2. but accept salvation as
 - a. a fact to be realized, transforming your life
 - b. a reality to be anticipated, of an eternal sonship to God
 - c. a matter for praise, for witness, to sing ... Saved, Saved!

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. “What Jonah’s Fish Indicates” – Kerux illustration #2577 / #6669
3. ‘You Can’t Keep a Good Man Down’ by Dr James A McCullen – Kerux sermons #8205
4. Where not otherwise indicated, scriptural quotations are from the New American Standard version of the Bible, © 1960, ... 1995 by The Lockman Foundation; used by permission.
5. ‘Modern Man Swallowed by a Whale?’ by George Plagenz, from Coshocton Tribune – Kerux illustrations #636
6. ‘Salvation’ by William R. Perkins – Kerux illustration #1792

7. "None but Christ Can Satisfy" by J. McGranahan, #853 in Sankey's Sacred Songs & Solos (1200 piece edition)