

A Great storm – A Greater Savior

Welcome back to Jonah, a very small book in size with a major impact in our contemporary lives.

Jonah is not fiction. Nothing in the Hebrew text insinuates that Jonah is merely literary device, that the fish is “fishy” and that it is “too good to be true.” Further, the fish has a minor role in the story and is mentioned in only three verses.

The story of the Creator God and the Saving God is an unbelievable story. The message of the Gospel is that Yahweh sent his Son who became flesh, born of a virgin-as predicted long ago, for his enemies. That God was not welcomed in the world and was killed. That this same Son then rose again in 3 days because he lived a sinless life and his sacrifice on behalf of humanity accepted. And this Jesus now sits at the right hand of His eternal heavenly father. If you believe this....

There is something about a storm that focuses our minds, burns our memories, and transforms the trajectory of our lives.

I grew up hearing about the storm Betsey in 1965. I remember Andrew in 1992 and lived through Katrina in 2005. I remember the SF earthquake in 1989. And the ice storm in MS in 1994. Some of you lived through the Snowpocalypse in 1993 and were stranded in 2014.

Today we remember a great storm. In the midst of the storm we reflect on our Great Savior.

Read [Jonah 1:7-16](#)

God wants your attention! (1:7)

This situation was the impetus that led seasoned captain to say to the prophet: **Wake up!!** This storm was and journey was how the Lord God moved the sailors to declare that he was the one true God!!!

Please hear the force behind this narrative: **God wants, deserves, and demands your complete attention.** **Heb. 12:1** Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, **2 keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the source and perfecter of our faith.

Right now—the Lord wants you to fix your eyes upon Him. Don’t look at the storm--- Look through the storm and to Christ.

What is the Lord doing/using right now to get your attention, to draw you to his gracious throne of mercy? What would it take for a bunch of seasoned, salty, non-god fearing and knowing sailors to recognize his

power and glory? A sunset? A beautiful rainbow? A majestic sea? For these sailors, it took a storm to shake them at their core.

God does not always use storms and seas—but we **often cry out to the Lord in the storm more quickly** than on the mountain. **Why? Valleys cause us to look up and mountains make it easier for us to look down.**

God is asking for your attention today. Don't endure the storm and miss the savior. The Sovereign grace of Christ is inviting you to look through the storm and trust in his saving power! Don't enjoy the mountain peak, celebrate and miss the one who created the mountains. Celebrate His Grace. Know the Lord and Enjoy him forever.

God does not want your attention only on Sundays. I have to believe this was a trip, this was a moment that forever changed the way these sailors called upon the Lord. Here is the power and beauty of Yahweh. **He loves you, is pursuing you, and is using any means necessary to get your attention. Often God uses our idols or our strengths to get our attention.**

Mariners: God send a storm that rocked their world and boat. David the shepherd: the prophet told him a story about a rich man who stole the sheep of a poor man. Andrew-Simon/Peter? Jesus gave these fishermen the best catch in their lives. Casting lots? Pointed to Jonah. In Scripture and the ancient world they threw stones to seek the wisdom of the Lord. These lots selected the scapegoat (Lev. 16:8), allocated land in the Promised Land, chose the order of priests (Neh 10:34) and appointed the 13th apostle (Acts 1:26).

If God can uses the mechanisms to open my eyes—then everything in my life is now a tools to help build my faith and get my attention. **So we ask this morning—what is it Lord? What are you using today to gain access to my heart..**

Turn you eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

Wake Up!!! Come On!!! Father you have our attention and devotion.

Jonah is a clear reminder that a Holy God will never ignore our sin (1:7-8)

There is NO- **not one sin in my life** that is/will be ignored by a Holy Righteous God. The sailors cast lots to discover who was to “**blame.**” Literally they said “let us cast lots to and know who (brought) this evil to us.” When the lot fell to Jonah they said “tell us now why this evil is upon us.” This is a similar to what the Lord said to Jonah in 1:2: preach against Nineveh because their evil has come up before me.”

The clear message: Jonah, I have not ignored the sin of Nineveh. This Nineveh was not part of the promised Land. This Nineveh was not part of the community of faith in Yahweh. And yet the Lord declared

that he saw their sin. Instead of declaring the message of the Lord **Jonah added sin to sin** and ran. The sailors singled out Jonah for the trouble/sin that was on the boat.

The message was clear: Jonah I will not ignore your rebellion. Our sins are not hidden and every sin will one day be accounted for. God did not ignore the sins of Nineveh and He did not overlook the iniquity of Jonah the prophet, and he will not look past your sin. It is appointed for everyone once to die and then judgement. **Thank God that He did/does not ignore sin.**

Col. 1:21 Once you were alienated and **hostile** in your minds expressed in your evil actions. ²² **But now** he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you **holy, faultless, and blameless** before him

Will you run into God's grace today?

The Storms are often a true test of my faith (1:9-10)

For Jonah, it took a major life threatening storm to ask the **introspective question**: what people are you from? It was as the **puritans call it "a severe mercy."** That caused Jonah to look inward. You see Jonah was a famous prophet yet was living a life of **eternal submission and lacking inward obedience** and submission to the faith. An all along God was using this **external storm** to ask Jonah: Who are you? Do you trust me?

A Grief Observed is a collection of C. S. Lewis's reflections on the experience of bereavement following the death of his wife, **Joy Davidman**, in 1960. "God has not been trying an experiment on my faith or love in order to find out their quality. He knew it already. **It was I who didn't.** In this trial He makes us occupy the dock, the witness box, and the bench all at once. He always knew that my temple was a house of cards. His only way of making me realize the fact was to knock it down."

Storms test the quality of our faith. God knows--- we do not.

Jonah: Who are you? Do you really worship the one true Lord and Savior? Is your faith external and lacking internal submission? God wants your whole life and already knows the quality of your faith.

Maybe in your life right now God is using the storms of life to knock down your house of cards and showing you the quality of your faith.

We all have storms that have we cannot fix (1:12-13)

The men overwhelmed by a great fear went straight into **man-mode**. First, they ask: What should we do? How can we fix the issue?? Second, they find the answer: pick Jonah up and throw him into the sea because Jonah was the sinner. So what did they do? **Remember man mode?** They did not listen to direction and they rowed harder. The Hebrew word refers to digging in the ground or piercing through wall. They were rowing so hard that the oars possibly shattered under the strength of the sea.

Listen to Jonah, the answer to your sin (an unquenchable storm) and desperate spiritual situation is not try harder. The answer to find dry land- lands of safety, peace, and salvation is not “row harder.” It is not pray this prayer, go to this church, walk this aisle, read this verse, or meditate on these thoughts. Have you turned to Christ?

There are storms in our live that have no hope but to point us to the eternal God. These storms might not be directly because of your sin. What was the fault of the sailors? Getting into the boat? Going to work? I have stood at the funerals of several young people 20’s, teens’ and infants. And I look to these parents and I cannot say it will be ok.

I can not say that I have a fix. All I can say is that all I have is in Christ. I believe that he is my hope, he defeated the grave, and he is the rescuer!!

God’s grace is never far away (1:15-16)

Oh how desperate our situation. But oh how marvelous the grace of a loving Lord. By asking the sailors to throw him overboard Jonah was attempting death and somewhat admitting he was the problem. But this admission of guilt is not the only problem. We are all guilty whether we admit it or now.

Here we see the deep contrast between the sailors and the prophet. The pagan sailors called and accepted the burden and blame when Jonah would not.

We live in a world where it is far *easier to place blame* to than to accept the full burden of our sins and failings. Its not your fault it is my upbringing, my lack of opportunities, the temptations were to great, or I cant be blamed for something I did not know.

Accepting responsibility for my sin is the first step of repentance. This is the answer to Who are you? I am a sinner!! **And God’s answer is my grace is sufficient.**

The sailor’s declared” Lord don’t let us perish because of this man’s life, and don’t charge us with innocent blood.” This is a picture of the Gospel.

In even greater sacrifice—the death of one innocent man, and the shedding of his blood now gives us eternal life and redemption.

Run into His Grace! You will go through great storms--- but we have a greater Savior

Maybe you are in the midst of a storm (sickness- pain- financial ruin- broken marriage- addictions— numbness)and you believe. Hear this prayer of Habakkuk

Hab 3:17 Though the fig tree does not bud
and there is no fruit on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though the flocks disappear from the pen

18 and there are no herds in the stalls,
yet I will celebrate in the LORD;
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!

We will have many storms --- but there is a greater Savior. Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face—and the storms of this world will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.

My Response to the Gospel

He is the glorious Light. He is the rightful king who sets us free from the law of sin and death. Are you trying to keep control of your kingdom?

Will you pray to the one who sent his son that so All might believe and the one who gives light to everyone?

Notes

✍ Verses 9-10 represent the focal point of this section and pick up key motifs of Yahweh, the sea, and fear. (NICOT)

Jonah 1:9 ¶ So he said to them, “I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry *land*.”

Jonah 1:10 ¶ Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “Why have you done this?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

✍ The men realize their humanity in the face of such divine power (NICOT)

✍ Since Jonah’s God is behind the storm, Jonah ought to know best how to quench the wrath (NICOT)

✍ Jonah’s confession that he fears the Lord is almost immediately followed by a further reference to fear: This terrified them (TOTC)

✍ Exceedingly afraid⌘

○ Literally “the men feared a great fear”. The intensification of their emotion expressed by the internal accusative helps convey the fact that their initial fear of the storm was magnified when they learned that they were in the power of a mighty Deity (Lord) (Simon)

○ Fear= worship.

○ In this discussion, biblical usages of נִיִּי are divided into five general categories: 1) the emotion of fear, 2) the intellectual anticipation of evil without emphasis upon the emotional reaction, 3) reverence or awe, 4) righteous behaviour or piety, and 5) formal religious worship (TWOT)

✍ The sailors “fear” his mighty hand but do not “fear” him as Lord nor recognize his sovereignty (JPS).

✍ Why have you done this⌘Literally “what is this [that] you have done?” (JPS)

○ “what this you did now?”

○ This is the same question the Lord asked Eve after she sinned. **Gen. 3:13** ¶ And the LORD God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?” (Zehabe)

✍ The men knew⌘they did not desire an answer to this question because they already know the answer.

Jonah 1:11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”— for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

Jonah 1:12 ¶ And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest *is* because of me.”

✍ Having identified the source of their trouble the sailors still require a solution to the ever- worsening situation (TOTC).

✍ For the sailors to survive life must be sacrifice (TOTC)

✍ Cast me in⌘

○ Jonah submits to his Pursuer but persists in his rebellion. He chooses death— passive suicide—to abandoning his flight and prophesying. (JPS)

○ Cast into the depths of the sea will be the fourth and evidently final descent in the course of his vertical

flight (JPS).✍ For I know✍

○ Jonah, compared to the sailors knowing (v.10) sidesteps the question of guilt while accepting full responsibility for their safety and converting his drowning from an act of punishment into a deed that will save them (JPS)

Jonah 1:13 ¶ Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them.

Jonah 1:14 Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, “We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You.”

✍ The message of v.13 is that Jonah is deserving of death. By going into the sea he receives a death sentence (NICOT).

✍ The sailors make a valiant effort to bring the ship to shore, however their struggle is in vain (TOTC)

✍ Rowed hard✍

○ The root HTR in the bible refers to digging in the ground or piercing through walls.

Possibly evidences that the oars shattered under the strength of the sea (JPS)

✍ They cried out✍

○ Again shows the contrast between the pagan sailors and the prophet. They called out and accepted the burden when Jonah would not (JPS)

✍ What a contrast to the age we live in. In an age where we blame leaders for our problems, the book of Jonah relentlessly examines the follower. The real question remains “Who do you follow and how well?” (Zehabe).

Jonah 1:15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.

Rev. 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

○ Heaven and earth will be replaced by a new version

○ **2Pet. 3:10** ¶ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

○ The new covenant is superior to the old. The new heavens will be superior to the Old

○ New✍this word in Greek means new in quality not just in Time!!!

○ SEA✍See Isa 65:21-24. Probably refers to tribulation of the saints (See Rev. 21:4 as an elaboration)

○ Sea in the Ancient world represented chaos, disorder, and unrighteousness. ○ Sea was a place of danger and thus the source of the Evil beast in Rev. 13.

○ New Jerusalem—the old one is not just rebuilt. It is completely replaced and the builder is God (Heb. 11:10)

○ It comes down from God not up from man.

○ The master image of this new unit is the New Jerusalem. The new haven and new earth are necessary only as a backdrop of a suitable symbolic space for the City of God (Stevens)

○ Even though John uses great images to describe the New Jerusalem, the focus is not the place but the person who inhabits the new city.

○ Bride adorned

○ This new metaphor brings out the joyous intimacy of relationship (Stevens). ○

Jonah 1:16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

✍ With the calming of the sea the sailors are immediately filled with awe, the narrative again focuses on the fear of the Lord (TOTC)

Jonah 1:17 ¶ 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.

✍ Prepared ✂ literally appointed ?

Application

Big Questions

What is my message about?

Can I know for sure?

Why is it important?

The Lord assures us of His salvation and gives you confidence to be in his presence.

What do I want them to do?

Believe in Jesus Christ

Life out eternal life

Live with boldness and confidence.

What is the single most persuasive idea?

The One who is in you is greater than the one in the world

