2. Jonah's Prayer

Sermon Notes
Text: Jonah 1:17-2:9

The Fish:

In Jonah 1:17, we see that the Lord provides a huge fish to swallow Jonah. For many, this verse serves as a stumbling block. It just doesn't seem possible for something like this to actually happen!

But if we look across all of Scripture, we see that the Bible is *full* of miracles. In fact, if we are Christians, our entire faith is built upon believing in a miracle: that Jesus died and was raised back to life.

In this light, let's not dwell upon what is/isn't possible but instead on what this passage teaches us about God.

The Prayer:

Jonah 2:1-9 is a prayer.

Jonah borrows from the Psalms to acknowledge his tough situation. He doesn't shy away from the fact that it is God who brought about the storm, but he also acknowledges that it is God who has saved him.

Up until this point in the book of Jonah, prayer has not been mentioned. But as Jonah faces a life and death situation, he finally reaches out to God. In that moment, prayer is exactly what Jonah needs.

- Prayer re-establishes God as our Lord & King
- Prayer reminds us that God is a miracle worker
- Prayer challenges us to bring all things to God

Repentance:

The missing piece to Jonah's prayer is repentance. In this way, his prayer seems to mirror the prayer of the Pharisee is Luke 18:9-14.

His lack of repentance indicates that Jonah thinks highly of himself. But as he tries his best to check all the right boxes with his prayer, he ends up missing the point.

God doesn't just want to save Jonah physically. He wants to show Jonah mercy by forgiving him. But for this to happen, Jonah needs to repent and recognize his need for God.

Conclusion:

So what can we learn from the second chapter of Jonah?

1. We serve an incredible, all-powerful God that will stop at nothing to see His will done.

2. It is never too late to pray.

3. Don't forget to repent!

Connect Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What is your favourite method of transportation?

2. I imagine that Jonah encountered some pretty nasty smells inside the great fish. What's the worst smell you've ever encountered?

Study & Discussion:

1. Why do you think God sent a fish to save Jonah rather than some other means of transportation?

2. It takes Jonah facing certain death and being swallowed by a fish in order to pray to God. Do you ever struggle to bring your troubles to God first before exhausting other options?

3. Has God ever taken drastic measures to try and get your attention? Have you ever seen trials bring you closer to God like Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9?

4. Read Psalm 42 & Jonah 2:1-9. What similarities & differences do you notice between the Psalm & Jonah's prayer?

5. Read Luke 18:9-14. Who do you identify with more? The Pharisee or the tax collector?

Practice:

If there's one takeaway from this Sunday, it is the need to repent. However, sometimes it can feel confusing or overwhelming to figure out what we need to repent of.

So this week, let's set aside 20-30 minutes to spend time in prayer, asking God what we need to repent of.

Find a quiet space where you won't be interrupted and pray this:

"God, I want to live differently than Jonah. I want to experience the incredible mercy of Your forgiveness. Would You speak to me now of what I need to repent of?"

Then, let God lead and direct your thoughts. It may be helpful to have a journal or a piece of paper to write things down as they come to mind.

When you feel ready, repent and ask God to forgive you of those things. You'll be amazed by how good it feels to be forgiven by the Creator of the universe!

Prayer:

Conclude by reading the Lord's prayer together.

Matthew 6:9-13