

Learning to Really Pray 学习真正的祷告
Jonah 约拿书 2:1-4 | July 七月 12, 2026

“Help! Save us! We can’t hang on much longer!” This was the cry that woke my parents into action.

“救命! 救救我们! 我们撑不了多久了!”正是这一声呼救，惊醒了我的父母，使他们立刻行动起来。

When I was a child, we lived on a lakeside on Vancouver Island. On warm summer nights, it was common to hear voices across the lake. 小时候，我们住在温哥华岛的一个湖边。每逢温暖的夏夜，常常都能听见湖对岸传来的声音。

People would be up late and partying; and sound travels far across the water. So even though it was late at night, and even though our whole family was asleep in bed, hearing a few voices across the water was nothing out of the usual in the summertime. Even calls for help were usually just young people goofing around.

人们会熬夜、开派对，而且湖面又特别容易传声，所以即使夜已深了，即使我们全家都已睡下，听见湖对岸传来一些声音，在夏天也是平常不过的事。甚至偶尔会听见有人喊“救命”，通常也只是年轻人在嬉戏打闹而已。

But there was something different about this cry for help. It was that phrase “We can’t hang on much longer!” When my parents heard that, they heard a note of desperation. Someone was really in trouble out in the water.

但这次的呼救声有些不同，正是“我们撑不了多久了!”这句话。当我父母听见这句话时，他们从声音里听出了绝望，便知道湖里真的有人陷入了困境。

They jumped out of bed, grabbed their flashlights, ran down to the lake, climbed into our small aluminum boat, and headed across the dark water, listening attentively for those desperate calls for help.

他们跳下床，拿起手电筒，跑到湖边，爬上我们小小的铝制船，驶向黑暗的水面，同时仔细聆听那一声声绝望的呼救。

A few hundred feet from shore, they found a pair of young men, who clearly had been drinking too much, clinging to their submerged canoe.

在距离岸边几百英尺的地方，他们发现了两名年轻男子。很明显，他们喝了太多酒，正紧紧抓着已经沉没在水中的独木舟。

They had no life jackets and had been frantically trying to swim to shore, pulling their sinking canoe with them. They were exhausted and on the edge of hypothermia.

他们没有穿救生衣，正拼命地游向岸边并拖着正在下沉的独木舟。他们已筋疲力尽，几乎因失温而陷入危险。

Another neighbor had also shown up to help with their boat. Together they pulled the two young men into the boats, brought them into their homes, and gave them hot showers.

另一位邻居也驾着自己的船来帮忙。他们合力将这两名年轻人拉上船，带回自家屋里并让他们洗了热水澡。

That’s when I woke up, as the bathroom was next to my bedroom. Both of the young men recovered quickly. They later sent my parents a thank you card. And I guess they lived happily ever after.

就在这时我醒了，因为浴室就在我的卧室旁边。那两位年轻人很快就恢复了身体。后来，他们给我父母寄了一张感谢卡。我估计他们从此过着幸福快乐的生活。

In fact, many years later, one of them won a major lottery. Some would say he had a lucky life. But if my parents and a neighbor hadn’t come to his rescue, his life would have been a very short one.

事实上，许多年后，其中一人中了大彩票。有人会说他有幸运的人生。但如果我的父母和邻居没有前去营救，他的生命会是非常短暂的。

Whether or not he ever recognized it, God heard his desperate cry for help and rescued him.

无论他是否意识到这一点，神都听到了他绝望的呼救，并拯救了他。

I don’t know whether either of these young men believed in God. I don’t know if they ever prayed to God. But humanly speaking, their cries for help were an example of prayer. Crying out “help” is the most basic prayer.

我不知道这两位年轻人是否相信神，也不知道他们是否曾向神祷告。但从人的角度来说，他们的呼救就是一个祷告的例子。呼喊“救命”是最基本的祷告。

There are times in life when all we can pray is “help me, God!” There are times when the most authentic prayer is simply to cry to God for help. When we sense our desperate need, then we are driven to pray.

人生中总有一些时刻，是唯有祈祷“神啊，帮帮我！”有些时候，最真实的祷告往往只是单单向神呼求帮助。当我们意识到自己的迫切需要时，我们才会被驱使去祷告。

God can use desperate circumstances to drive us from superficial prayer to really praying. It was the desperation in the voices of those drowning men that sprung my parents into action.

神会借用绝望的处境，促使我们从表面的祷告走向真正的祷告。正是那两位溺水年轻人声音中的绝望，促使我的父母采取行动。

When we cry out to God in desperation, He hears us. He will save us. More than that, He will teach us to really pray -- to have a truly authentic relationship with Him.

当我们在绝望中向神呼求，祂必垂听，祂会拯救我们。不仅如此，祂还会教导我们如何真正地祷告——与祂建立真正的真实关系。

In our sermons, we have been following the story of Jonah in the Old Testament book named after him. Before this story had even begun, Jonah was already established as a famous prophet. He had a great resume. He was a successful religious professional.

在这系列讲道中，我们一直使用以约拿名字命名的旧约圣经《约拿书》。约拿书的故事开始之前，约拿就已经是位著名的先知了。他有份出色的履历，是位成功的宗教专业人士。

In 2 Kings 14:23 we learn that Jonah had prophesied that the nation of Israel would have military victories and extend its borders – and the prophecy had come true. He was undoubtedly known as a successful prophet, and he would have been seen as a national hero. He was the kind of prophet you would want on your side.

从列王纪下 14:23 我们得知，约拿曾预言以色列国将获得军事胜利并会扩张其疆界，而这个预言已经应验了。毫无疑问，约拿是一位公认的成功先知并被视为国家英雄。他是那种你会希望他站在你这边的先知。

But after all this success, Jonah still had a lot to learn. He had major attitude problems. And he needed to learn to pray. 然而，在经历这一切成功后，约拿仍然需要学习许多。他有严重的态度问题，而且他需要学习祷告。

He had probably prayed many times throughout his life, but he still needed to learn to have a more authentic life of prayer – to recognize how much all his success depended on God.

在他的一生中，可能已经祷告过许多次，但他仍然需要学习过一种更真实的祷告生活——认识到他所有的成功都是多么的依赖神而来。

Jonah needed to learn how desperately his very life depended on God. Jonah needed to learn to really pray. After all Jonah’s successes, the place he really learned to pray was at the lowest point of his life – at death’s door, in the belly of a monstrous fish. Jonah had to learn how desperately he needed God’s help.

约拿需要学习他的生命本身就有多么迫切地依赖神。他需要学习真正的祷告。在经历一切成功之后，约拿真正学会祷告是在他人最低谷的时候——在死亡边缘，在大鱼腹中。约拿须学会他是迫切地需要神的帮助。

Real prayer begins when we realize that unless God helps us, our situation is truly desperate. Real prayer is saying to God, “without You, God, I’m sunk!”

真正的祷告始于我们意识到：除非神帮助我们，否则我们的处境确实令人绝望。真正的祷告是向神说：“神啊，没有祢，我就完蛋了！”

You see, Jonah was in a perilous condition not only when he was drowning in the sea, and not only when he was in the belly of the fish – Jonah was in desperate danger from the moment he decided to refuse God’s call.

你看，约拿当时身处的险境不仅是在海里溺水或是在大鱼腹中；而是从他决定拒绝神的呼召那一刻起，约拿就已经处于极度危险之中。

Long before the storm, long before he was tossed into the raging sea, Jonah was in grave danger. From the moment he turned away from Nineveh, from the moment he left Jerusalem in the other direction, his soul was in desperate need.

早在风暴来临之前，早在被投入汹涌的大海之前，约拿就已经处于极度的危险中。从他转身离开尼尼微的那一刻起，从他离开耶路撒冷、朝着相反方向而去的那一刻起，他的灵魂就陷入了绝望的匮乏中。

But now, in the belly of a fish, he finally admits it.

而如今，在鱼腹中，他终于承认了这一点。

I'm not saying that in order to pray, we must be in a bad situation, or that we need to stir ourselves into a panic. Things may actually be going well. Our circumstances may be relatively pleasant. We may be enjoying a close, obedient walk with God.

我不是说为了祷告，我们必须处于糟糕的境地，或者需要让自己陷入恐慌。事实上，一切也许都很顺利，我们的环境可能相当舒适。我们可能正享受着与神亲密且顺服的同行。

But in order to really pray, we need to deeply acknowledge that without God's help, we **would** be in big trouble.

Without God's help, we could not save ourselves. Without God's forgiveness, we would be eternally condemned.

但要真正地祷告，我们必须深深承认：若没有神的帮助，我们会陷入大麻烦。若没有神的帮助，我们无法拯救自己。若没有神的赦免，我们将永远被定罪。

Without God's guidance we could not navigate this life. Without God's grace, we could not accomplish anything of value. To really pray, we need to recognize how desperately we need God.

若没有神的引导，我们无法在人生道路上前行。若没有神的恩典，我们无法成就任何真正有价值的事。要真正地祷告，我们必须认识到自己是何等迫切地需要神。

Real prayer begins with recognizing that our own resources aren't enough, that without God, we're sunk.

真正的祷告始于认识到我们自己的资源是不够的；没有神，我们就完蛋了。

Jonah had been going his own way. He had been relying on his own resources. He possessed enough money to pay for a cruise to the farthest port in the known world. He was so self-satisfied that he could sleep through a raging storm.

约拿一直在走自己所定的路，一直依赖自己的资源。他拥有足够的钱来支付船费，前往当时世界已知的最远港口。他是如此自满，以至于在狂风暴雨中还能安然入睡。

So God sends him right into the heart of the storm, right to the gates of death itself. And then, finally, in the belly of a huge fish, Jonah finally can admit, as we read in 2:2: "I called for help". A better translation of this would be "I was screaming for help!"

因此，神把他直接送进风暴中心，直接送到死亡的大门。最后，在一条大鱼的腹中，约拿终于能够承认，正如 2:2 读到的：“我呼求帮助”。对此更贴切的翻译应该是：“我在拼命呼救！”

It was finally a real prayer, like those drowning men clinging to their canoe: "we can't hang on much longer!"

这终于是个真实的祷告，就像那紧紧抓着独木舟、快要溺水的年轻人的呼喊一样：“我们撑不了多久了！”

Jonah finally realized how dangerous his situation was, he finally admitted how perilous his spiritual condition was, and he screamed desperately from the belly of the fish, and God heard his prayer. When we acknowledge how desperately we need God, then we really pray.

约拿终于意识到自己的处境有多么危险，终于承认自己属灵的光景有多么岌岌可危。于是从鱼腹中发出绝望的呼喊，而神垂听了他的祷告。当我们承认自己是何等迫切地需要神时，我们才真正开始祷告。

But real prayer is not merely reacting to desperate circumstances.

然而，真正的祷告不仅仅是对绝望处境的反应。

Yes, Jonah's circumstances convinced him of his need to pray. But in this prayer, Jonah takes the next step. As he prays, Jonah turns his attention away from his circumstances, and begins to focus on God Himself.

是的，约拿的处境使他意识到自己需要祷告。但在祷告中，约拿迈出了下一步。在祷告时，约拿将注意力从自己的处境转移，开始专注于神自己。

Notice that Jonah begins in verse 2 by referring to God in the 3rd person, as “He”. But by the end of that same verse, Jonah addresses God in the 2nd person, as “You”. Jonah says to God, “...You listened to my cry.”

注意约拿在第 2 节开始时，是用第三人称来称呼神为“祂”。但在同一节的末尾，约拿用第二人称对神说“祢”。约拿对神说：“.....祢就俯听我的声音。”

In the rest of the prayer, Jonah continues to talk directly to God, addressing God with the pronoun “You”. His conversation with God becomes personal, honest, and intimate.

在接下来的祷文中，约拿继续直接向神说话，用“祢”来称呼祂。他与神的对话变得个人化、诚实并亲密。

Jonah is now speaking with God as person to Person. Even later in the book, when Jonah is angry with God, and even argues with God, Jonah is at least talking **to** God, addressing Him personally as “You”.

如今，约拿正以一个人对另一个人的方式，直接与神面对面交谈。甚至在本书的后部分，当约拿对神发怒，甚至与神争辩时，他至少是在**向神**说话，亲自称呼祂为“祢”。

In 4:2, when Jonah complains to God, he says “**You** are a gracious and compassionate God”. It’s a strange thing to complain about. Jonah still has more lessons to learn, but at least he is now speaking directly and honestly to God.

在 4:2，当约拿向神抱怨时，他说：“**祢**是有恩惠，有怜悯的神”。这是很奇怪的抱怨。约拿还要学习许多功课，但至少此时的他已经开始直接而诚实地与神说话了。

Here in the belly of the fish is where Jonah begins to talk honestly with God. He doesn’t make excuses. He doesn’t complain about the consequences he’s suffered. He accepts that his situation is well-deserved.

正是在大鱼腹中，约拿开始诚实地与神交谈。他不找借口，也没有抱怨自己所遭受的后果。他承认自己的处境是咎由自取。

In 2:2, Jonah gives this testimony: “I said ‘I have been banished from your sight’”. Jonah is being honest about his situation. He doesn’t protest how God has dealt with him. He admits that deserves these consequences. Jonah is finally being honest with God.

约拿在 2:2 作出了见证：“我说：‘我从祢眼前被驱逐’”。约拿正在诚实面对自己的处境。他没有抗议神如何对待他。他承认自己理应承受这些后果。约拿终于对神诚实了。

But the second half of verse 4 is where Jonah really turns a corner. Jonah resolves to turn the gaze of his heart toward God. Jonah says, “Yet I will look again towards your holy temple.”

但第 4 节的后半部分才是约拿真正迎来转折的地方。约拿决心将自己内心的目光重新投向神。约拿说：“然而我仍要仰望你的圣殿”。

Since the very beginning of this book Jonah had been turning his face **away** from God. Ever since God had called him to go to Nineveh, Jonah had been running away from God.

从本书一开头，约拿就一直将脸**转离**神；从神呼召他去尼尼微以来，约拿就一直在逃离神。

Jonah ran away from the temple, which symbolized God’s presence. Jonah had refused to pray, even when the pagan sailors begged him to. Jonah had refused to talk to God. He had turned his face away from God.

约拿离开了象征神同在的圣殿；约拿也曾拒绝祷告，就是当异教徒水手们哀求他时，他拒绝与神说话。约拿把脸从神面前转离。

Now, in the belly of the fish, Jonah finally turns the gaze of his heart toward God. When Jonah says in verse 4 that he is looking towards God’s “holy temple”, that means he is meditating on the place where pure and precious sacrifices were offered to God. This was a place where God displayed his mercy to his people, and where God showed that He forgave the sins of his people.

现在，在鱼腹中，他终于将他内心的目光转向神。当约拿在第 4 节说他正仰望神的“圣殿”时，意味着他正在默想那个向神献上纯洁又珍贵祭物的地方，是神向祂子民彰显怜悯的地方，也是神显明赦免自己子民罪恶的地

方。

This pointed to the ultimate sacrifice centuries later when Jesus, the perfect and innocent Lamb of God, would shed his blood on the cross, so that we too could be forgiven of all our sin, so that we can be forgiven of all the ways in which we have run away from God, so that we too, like Jonah, can be reconciled to God.

这预表着数百年以后的终极祭献：当耶稣作为神完美无瑕、毫无罪污的羔羊，祂要在十字架上流出祂的宝血，使我们所有的罪孽都能得到赦免，使我们所有逃离神指示的道都能被宽恕，使我们能像约拿一样与神和好。

From the belly of a giant fish, Jonah finally turns the gaze of his heart toward our merciful God, toward God who forgives us and restores us back to an intimate relationship with Him.

在大鱼腹中，约拿终于将内心的目光转向满有怜悯的神，转向那位赦免我们、恢复我们与祂亲密关系的神。

Real prayer begins with honesty about our situation. It is a cry for help, but real prayer then turns our focus away from our circumstances, as we look to God and focus on his inexhaustible mercy.

真正的祷告始于诚实面对自身处境，是求救的呼喊；但真正的祷告随后会将我们的焦点从自己的处境移开，使我们仰望神并专注于祂无穷无尽的怜悯。

Real prayer admits our desperate need for God. Real prayer is honest and direct with God. Real prayer turns our focus beyond our circumstances, and fixes the gaze of our hearts firmly on God Himself.

真正的祷告承认我们对神的迫切需要。真正的祷告是诚实而直接的面对神。真正的祷告将我们的焦点转移到我们的处境之外，并将我们内心的目光坚定地专注在神自己身上。

And real prayer is grounded in thankfulness. This entire prayer, prayed from the belly of a giant fish, is actually a prayer of thanksgiving. Jonah realizes that he is at death's door, yet still he gives thanks to God.

而且真正的祷告是以感恩为基础。从大鱼腹中发出的祷告，实际是一篇感恩的祷告。约拿意识到自己处于死亡的边缘，但他仍然向神献上感谢。

This is made clearest in verse 9, which is a summary of the entire prayer. In that verse, Jonah describes this entire prayer as being "a song of thanksgiving". But we'll save that verse for next week.

这在第9节中表现得最清楚，这是整篇祷告的总结。约拿将整篇祷告描述为“感恩的诗歌”。不过，那节经文我们要留到下个星期再来讨论。

For now, let's just note that real prayer flows from gratefulness to God. Real authentic prayer begins when even in the worst circumstances, we turn the gaze of our hearts toward God, and our eyes are opened to how much mercy He has shown us. We become thankful. Our prayers are grounded in gratefulness.

现在，让我们只注意，真正的祷告流淌自对神的感恩之心。真正并真实的祷告始于：即使在最糟糕的境地中，我们也将心灵的目光投向神，我们的眼睛得以被打开，看见祂向我们所施的怜悯是何等丰盛。于是，我们开始感恩，我们的祷告便扎根于感恩之中。

To be honest, I find it difficult to always be thankful. I can complain when circumstances don't go as I hope. If you're like me, the good news is that God is still at work within us. He isn't finished with us yet, even when we are ungrateful. 说实话，我发现时常保持感恩的心并不容易。当事情发展不如我所愿时，我也会抱怨。如果你像我一样，那么好消息是，神仍然在我们里面作工。即使我们不感恩，祂也没有停止在我们身上的工作。

God heard Jonah's desperate prayer, but Jonah's heart was still far from perfect. We will see that in the later chapters of this book.

神垂听了约拿绝望的祷告，但约拿的心仍远远谈不上完美。我们将在本书后部分的章节中看到这一点。

Jonah still has a lot to learn. He still needs to grow. God is not finished with him yet. Jonah's prayer in the belly of the fish was a true turning point, but he still had attitude problems to deal with.

约拿还有许多需要学习的，他仍需要成长；神还没有完成在他身上的工作。约拿在鱼腹中的祷告确实是个真正的转折点，但他仍然有态度上的问题需要处理。

He was thankful for God's mercy for **him**, but he would still begrudge God showing mercy to **others**.

他感谢神向**自己**施怜悯，却仍然为神向**他人**彰显怜悯而感到不满。

Jonah was not yet fully repentant. But God is patient. God kept working on Jonah. God gave Jonah a second chance, and a third chance, and more. God will not give up on us.

约拿还没有完全悔改。但神是满有忍耐的，祂继续塑造约拿。神给了约拿第二次机会，第三次机会，甚至更多的机会。神不会放弃我们。

Real prayer isn't learned overnight. It isn't learned in a one-time crisis. Learning to pray is a life-long process in our relationship with God. We usually don't realize how much further we need to go. But God leads us lovingly, patiently, step-by-step.

真正的祷告不是一夜之间就能学会的，它不是在一次危机中就能学会的。学习祷告是我们与神关系中的终身过程。我们通常意识不到自己还需要走多远，但神会以慈爱和忍耐一步一步地带领我们。

Real prayer admits how desperately we need God's help. Real prayer is honest and direct with God. Real prayer turns our focus from our circumstances to God Himself. Real prayer is grounded in gratefulness to God.

真正的祷告承认我们何等迫切地需要神的帮助。真正的祷告是诚实且直接面对神。真正的祷告将我们的焦点从我们的处境转向神自己。真正的祷告扎根于对神的感恩。

But real prayer isn't learned in a day. It is a life-long process of growing, in a trusting relationship with God. And God will lead us in that process, step by step, patiently drawing us closer, into an intimate relationship with Himself.

但真正的祷告不是一天就能学会的，它是在与神建立信靠关系的过程中，是一生不断成长的历程。而神将在这过程中一步一步地引导我们，耐心地吸引我们靠近祂，进入与祂亲密的关系之中。

There are times in life when all we can pray is "help me, God! I can't hold on much longer!" But let's not wait until our situation gets desperate. Let's seek God every day in authentic prayer. And He will lead us patiently and lovingly, step by step.

人生总有些时候，我们唯一能够祷告的就是：“神啊，帮帮我！我快撑不下去了！”但我们不要等到处境变得绝望时，让我们每天都以真实的祷告来寻求神。以真实的祷告来寻求神，祂会用忍耐和慈爱引领我们。