

Jonah Prayed

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[0:00] And this is going to be the second sermon in the series as I preach through this marvelous and I think very familiar book in the Old Testament.

Well known of the minor prophets. A few weeks ago when I started studying the book of Jonah, I had this notion that I would kind of come up with a catchy title for my series of sermons. And so I thought about a number of things and of course in the course of my research I found a few ideas. And one was Jonah, a whale of a story.

I thought about that one. What do you think about that one? He's a big fish. Okay, I'm sorry. It wasn't a whale. So maybe we shouldn't use that one. So you might not like this one either. Jonah, God's whale mail to Nineveh. Okay. I'm kind of measuring your laughter to see just which one I should pick for the series.

[1:26] But really I like this one. And since the name Jonah means dove, and it does mean that, it means dove. Someone has come up with this title. Jonah, dove turns chicken.

Like that one? Oh, thank you. All those are pretty corny, aren't they? Right?

So I think I'll just abandon the whole idea of a title. Thank you. All that was introduction, just to kind of get you engaged with me this morning.

Because really this book is a marvelous book in the Old Testament. And though it is a short one, and though we know, if we know anything about the book of Jonah, we know that Jonah was really on the whole a miserable prophet.

In fact, as I mentioned last week, if you recall this book of the prophets, a minor prophet, and it really is minor because there's only half a verse of prophecy in the entire book.

[2:37] And yet, I guess I just would have to say it's one of my favorites of the minor prophets. Could be because of the significance of Jonah when I was a child in the story, in the familiar story, of course, about Jonah and the whale or the big fish.

But it's a marvelous book. Now, last week we took the entire first chapter. Well, except for one verse, and we'll get to that verse here this morning.

And last week, you might remember that in chapter 1, I highlighted or really structured the sermon around three, the three key characters in the chapter.

Jonah, of course, and I called him the unwilling servant, and he certainly was. And in that, he represents for us today the unwilling servant.

And, of course, as we go through the book, we're going to revisit that theme in regard to Jonah a number of times. I saw the key character. First one was Jonah, the unwilling servant.

[3:45] And then we also focused on the sailors there. And I said that they represent the unbelieving sinner. And then the third key character is Yahweh God Himself.

And Yahweh God represents the unstoppable Savior. These three characters, key characters in the story. And yet, I also mentioned, and I want to emphasize this again, that the principal character in the book of Jonah is not Jonah.

It's God. It's God. God is the principal character. Jonah is the unwilling servant, but God is the unstoppable Savior. That is, God is unstoppable in His desire to save.

And God graciously saves these unbelieving sinners in the story, the sailors. And He does so in spite of Jonah's disobedience.

As a matter of fact, I think you could argue that He saves the sailors there on the boat as a result of Jonah's unwillingness, his disobedience.

[5:00] All right, so we're finished with the sailors. They're done. Their story is told in the book. They have thrown Jonah overboard. And God, as it were, flipped the switch off on the storm.

And so now the seas are calm. And after a short, I think a short praise and worship service, the sailors sail off to their destination.

And so we're finished with the sailors. But we're not finished with Jonah, are we? And so what happened to Jonah? What about Jonah? Well, Jonah, of course, went from top side to bottom side, didn't he?

In fact, Jonah went from the deck of the ship to the bottom of the sea. And as we shall see in this chapter, eventually into the mouth of a great fish and into the belly of that fish.

And here, here's what we need to know. We need to understand that this is all part of God's plan. God is working this out. God is orchestrating this.

[6:03] And so here's what Jonah learned and what we must learn if we're going to understand or get anything out of this book. Jonah learned, first of all, that you cannot run from God.

You cannot hide from God to escape his call upon your life. That's pretty clear, isn't it? Or to put it in the way that Jonah was thinking, you cannot get so far away from God and his call upon your life so that in order for the thing to get done, God is just going to have to get somebody else.

That just will not work. And so that leads to the second thing that Jonah learned about God. And that is that God, if God wants you, He will get you.

He will. You can just mark it down. That is, He will have His way. Now, those two are pretty simple to see in the life of Jonah.

The third thing is simple to see as well. And this is what Jonah learned. That God will not hesitate to bring you to the very brink of disaster if you continue to run away from Him.

[7:15] God will not hesitate to do that. Even to utter ruin, if that's what it takes. Even to the brink of death itself.

If need be. Now, Jonah certainly learned that, didn't he? And we need to learn that as well. That doesn't mean that God has to do that.

It doesn't mean that that's always God's plan. God knows all ends. He knows the end from the beginning. God knows all scenarios. It didn't have to happen this way with Jonah, did it?

And yet it did. And God did it. And God will not hesitate to bring you or me to the very brink of disaster, if need be, in order to get our attention so that we'll obey His will.

Now, Jonah learned these things in chapter 1. This is somewhat review, though the third one spills over into the sermon for today. But that leads us to the fourth thing that Jonah learned, is going to learn, and we're going to learn, here in chapter 2.

[8:31] And it's this. If you find yourself at the brink of disaster because you have been running from God, take heart.

God will turn your life around and forgive you and use you if. If. And the if is what we're going to learn in chapter 2.

Alright, so let's see how this plays out for the prophet Jonah. And I'm going to divide, or have divided, this chapter into two parts this morning. It is, in that sense, a two-part sermon.

God forgive me. And all Baptists who have come before me, forgive me for a two-part sermon. But it's okay. Because I have some sub-points as well. Many more than two.

Alright, so get ready for that. Here are the two divisions of the chapter. First of all, God's provision of deliverance.

[9:37] That's the first thing we see. God's provision of deliverance for the prophet Jonah. Now, remember I said last week that three times in chapter 1, we have Jonah going down.

You remember that? In fact, two of the three, we have the word down in the text. And it's very visual, very poignant in its message.

We have Jonah going down three times. Jonah leaves his town and goes down to Joppa to sail away from God. And then when he pays his fare, he goes down into the ship to, in effect, hide from God.

And then, finally, as we come to the close of the chapter, we have Jonah going down into the sea to die. So Jonah is going down, down, down.

And that is what disobedient servants of the Lord do. They go down. Because every step of disobedience is a step down from fellowship with God.

[10:48] Don't ever forget that. Alright, so that's how chapter 1 ends. Jonah goes down into the sea to die. Jonah would rather die than obey God.

But what does verse 17 tell us? And by the way, in the Hebrew Bible, verse 17 is actually verse 1 of chapter 2. And that's why I didn't take it last week, because it goes with chapter 2.

Okay? And so what does it say? Now the Lord, you see it there? Now the Lord had prepared a great fish. Now we kind of prefer to think that it was a whale, but the Bible doesn't tell us that. Now, I will say it's a whale a couple of times. You'll just have to forgive me. But this is what the Bible says. Now the Lord prepared a great fish.

To do what? To swallow Jonah. Now, this is a statement of God's deliverance. God delivers Jonah from certain death.

[11:53] God provides a way for Jonah's deliverance. He prepared a great fish. And this great fish swallowed Jonah. And then eventually, at the end of the chapter, this great fish is going to vomit Jonah out onto the dry ground.

All right? So this is God's deliverance very clearly as we look at the beginning of the chapter. And then we look at the end of the chapter. And so God has, we could say, two purposes for delivering Jonah.

In fact, you could use the word deliver in these two ways. I mean deliver, it could be deliver from something. And sometimes we use the word deliver in this sense. To deliver to something. From something to something. And God's deliverance of Jonah was for both purposes. To deliver from. From what?

Death. And to deliver to. To what? God's will. For him to go to Nineveh. So God delivers.

[12:57] Takes the whale. Uses this fish. To deliver Jonah from something. And to something. God delivered Jonah from death.

He delivered Jonah for his survival. And God delivered Jonah for his service. All right?

Those are the two sub points under deliverance. God delivered Jonah for his survival. The great fish swallowed him down for his survival.

And then God delivered Jonah for his service. The great fish spit him out for God's service. All right, let's just consider those two things under the provision of God's deliverance.

First of all, the fish swallowed him down for his survival. That's what we see in verse 17. The full verse. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah.

[13:58] And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Now folks, Jonah would have died were it not for this great fish. I know that there are some theologians that say that he actually did die.

And so it's a picture of his resurrection. To get the picture of Christ. What happened to Jesus is the same. But I don't think Jonah actually died. But he would have.

If God had not prepared this fish to swallow him. And so, right off the bat, we'd have to conclude that this is the mercy of God on display. God's having mercy on his disobedient prophet.

Jonah was a miserable failure. Now I know some great things happened on the ship. But it was not because of Jonah. It was because of God. And God delivered those sailors because of Jonah's unwillingness.

So Jonah is a miserable prophet. A disobedient prophet. And he's willing to throw everything away. Rather than obey God and follow God. But God is merciful.

[15:03] And God prepared a fish to deliver Jonah from the sea. And to keep him alive in its belly for three days and three nights. Amazing, isn't it? The mercy of God on display.

But this is also the power of God on display. Isn't it? The power of God. God prepared a fish to swallow Jonah and keep him alive three days and three nights.

Now, you know that this is the part of the story that moderates and liberals and modernists have scoffed at over the years. And they say, come on, you don't believe this fish story, do you?

Well, yes, I do. I think it's a true story. But it's really not that hard to believe. Is it? It's not that hard to believe.

In fact, John MacArthur said, he said, the miracle is not that Jonah could survive being in the fish, but that the fish could survive with a rotten prophet inside of his stomach. That may be the miracle here.

[16:10] Now, I think this is a miracle that God prepared this fish. But, you know, there are, after all, documented cases of men being swallowed alive by large fish, large whales, large sharks, and then living to tell about it.

There are documented cases of it. And it seems that we need that kind of proof, don't we? I mean, we're all the time trying to prove miracles to be real, that these things could actually happen. And we somehow, in our humanness, in our fleshliness, we need somehow for these miracles to be proved true. And all we need today is an archaeologist to dig up a big whale, the bones of a whale, and find Jonah's initials carved on one of its ribs.

And we say, aha, it's true, after all. We don't need that, do we? Do we? This is a miracle. This is supernatural. This is a testimony to the supernatural power of God. And you don't go out and try to prove the supernatural to be true in a real sense or in some literal sense.

[17 : 23] We don't have to go out and validate miracles by some scientific proof. I mean, after all, to prove that something could happen naturally is to discount or even remove the reality of the miracle.

So why do we want to do that? And by the way, God has already performed a number of miracles here in the book of Jonah. It was God who literally hurled out that storm out there on the sea and the wind.

And He was the one that supernaturally removed the storm instantaneously. And now here He is. He's prepared a fish, a great fish to swallow up Jonah.

That's a miracle. A little bit later in the book, we're going to have God preparing a vine, a plant, to provide shade for His discontented prophet.

And then the Bible is going to say that God is going to send a wind. And then God is going to prepare a worm. So we've got miracles all throughout this little book.

[18 : 37] But do you know why Satan wants us to believe that this is just a myth? A fictitious story? Do you know why?

Because the fish swallowing Jonah and keeping him alive for three days and three nights in its belly points us to something far greater.

A far greater miracle. Do you know what it is? You might look at Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12 and verse 38.

Here is the New Testament reference to Jonah. And the reference is given by Jesus Himself. And the Bible says there then, some of the scribes and Pharisees answered saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.

We know what's been claimed about you, that you are the Messiah and all these things. And we just need a sign to validate that. That's what these Pharisees said to Him.

[19 : 46] And of course, they are talking about a miracle, of course, you know. But He answered, this is what Jesus answered. He said to them, an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

You understand what He's saying here? Well, you understand the implication here. The implication is that Jesus certainly believed that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and survived for three days and three nights, came out alive and preached to the Ninevites, and the Ninevites were saved. Jesus believed that. And so He's saying, this is a true story. And I put side by side with that, this other true story, and that is the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth.

[21 : 09] The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus is putting two true stories side by side. And so if you throw out Jonah and the whale, then you have to throw out Jesus and the cross.

I mean, if Jonah and the whale is a myth, then that's just one step away from saying and believing that Jesus and the cross is a myth.

That's right. See, this is the mercy of God on display, but it is the power, also the power of God on display here. Believe it.

It's supernatural. And this is also the will of God on display. The will of God here. The fish swallowed him down so that at the appointed time, the fish would spit him out.

This was the plan. God's plan all along. And so, you see, God's purpose, God's will is going to be accomplished.

[22 : 19] And His will was a whole lot more than just the survival of His prophet. He had given Jonah a job to do, and Jonah's going to do it. So then, this provision of deliverance, not only the fish swallowed him down for his survival, but the fish spit him up or spit him out for his service.

For his service. And so, verse 10 says, So the Lord spoke to the fish. See, God's in charge of all of this.

The fish, by the way, more obedient than Jonah. And the fish does what? Vomited Jonah onto dry ground or dry land.

Now, I know the word vomit is one of those very unpleasant-sounding words. We don't really like to even hear the word, much less think about that.

And yet, the Bible includes the word quite a number of times. I'm not going to spend time citing those, but I will tell you this, that every time you find the word vomit in the Bible, it's always negative.

[23 : 34] It's always a bad thing. Except one. And it's here in Jonah. Seriously. The only time, I mean, Jonah is the only place where you find the word vomit.

I'm sorry, it kind of makes our stomach. The only place you'll find the word vomit used in a positive sense. You say this is positive? Well, ask Jonah.

Huh? I may get after agree that it was a pretty positive thing for Jonah. Right? He needed to get out of that whale. Listen. You need to understand that this, it was literally hell for Jonah inside the belly of that fish.

Don't get this story confused with Pinocchio. Okay? It was a bad thing. In fact, that's the way Jonah described it. He said it is the belly of Sheol.

That is, the heart of hell itself. This was no picnic for Jonah to be in the belly of this whale. It was a good thing when God spoke to that fish and said, alright, spit him out.

[24 : 49] And the fish did that. And the fish vomited Jonah onto the dry ground, the Bible says. And this is a testimony to the God who will do, will do His will, but He will go to great lengths to use His prophets, His servants, for His glory.

God will do that. Even if at first they don't want to be used by God. This is a testimony to the will of God to use us for His glory no matter what.

And really don't forget that God showed that to us in chapter 1 when He used Jonah to bring salvation to these sailors. And He's going to show that to us again in chapter 3 when God uses Jonah to bring a great, mighty revival to Nineveh.

Alright, so then, the fish swallowed him down at the beginning of the chapter for his survival. And the fish spit him out at the end of the chapter for his service.

And in the middle of the chapter we have Jonah praying from the middle of the fish. fish. Kind of works out that way as the story goes along.

[26 : 14] And so that brings us to the second part of the message and I would say the most important part of it. First, we have God's provision of deliverance.

And now we have Jonah's prayer of repentance. Jonah's prayer of repentance. repentance. Now let me repeat something that I said at the beginning of the message.

If you find yourself at the brink of disaster because you have been running from God, God will turn your life around, forgive you, and use you if.

And the if is if you will repent. If you will repent. And what does that repentance look like?

Well, four things. And they're right here in this prayer of Jonah's. These four things. This is a prayer of repentance. First, in repentance, and don't miss this, it's very key, in repentance, you, first of all, renew your submission to God.

[27 : 37] Now get that down. You renew once again, freshly, newly, you renew your submission to God. Look at verse one.

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from the fish's belly. I know the word submission is not in the text. But have you seen Jonah do this at any time before?

Pray to the Lord? No? This is the first time. How would things have gone if Jonah had prayed earlier than this?

If Jonah had renewed his submission to his God, to the Lord, earlier? Do you suppose that the thought crossed his mind there at home in Galilee when God first called him?

And the thought entered his mind that he would not go and that he would escape? Do you think the thought crossed his mind at that point, you know, I better get on my knees and pray.

[28:50] Ask God to forgive me. I don't know that it did. It doesn't seem that it did. And how about when he arrived at Joppa, by the way, the opposite direction of Nineveh?

What about after he arrived at Joppa and was inquiring about a ship that might take him far, far away? Do you think the thought entered his mind at that point that he should pray?

Ask God to forgive him and commit to obedience? Do you think the thought crossed his mind? I don't know. And just before he reached into his wallet, you know, to pull out the money, to pay the fare, get on board, do you think the thought entered his mind at that point, wait just a minute, I shouldn't do this.

God forgive me. Or as the boat launched out from the dock. And Jonah is down in the hold of the ship, presumably trying to hide from God.

Do you think he thought at that moment, this isn't right, I shouldn't be going, God, please forgive me.

[30:14] Do you think it entered his mind at that point? I don't know. Apparently not. And then when the storm rolled in, and when it first dawned on him, that it was because of him, that not only was the ship in peril, but all these sailors, their lives were in peril.

When he first figured it out, it's because of me, that would have been a good time for him to get on his knees and pray and ask God to forgive him.

Things would have been different, I think. And even the pagan ship's captain, remember he came to Jonah? Jonah was asleep down in the ship.

I don't know that he woke him up, but he said, wake up, you sleeper. We're all praying to our gods. You get up here and pray to your God. God, I mean, even a pagan is asking him to pray.

Did he? No. Did he have any intention of doing it? I don't think so. And picture the scene in chapter 1 and verse 11.

[31:34] We'll not go back to it, but picture that scene when the sailors have finally discovered, you know, they threw the dice and, you know, somehow God spoke through their kind of ritualistic way of discovering things and the truth of things.

And when they rolled the dice or whatever it was, and the lot fell on Jonah, and they finally figured out that it was Jonah's fault, and they asked him, what shall we do to you so that the sea may be calmed for us?

And what if Jonah at that very moment said to them, said, alright guys, hold on right here just a minute. I'll be right back.

And imagine Jonah going down into the hold of the ship and he gets on his knees and he's praying and he says, God, forgive me. I will go.

What would have happened? Well, you know what would have happened. The storm would have ceased. And I don't know if they could have turned around and gone back or if he would have to go and get another ship and go back or whatever, but things would have been quite different, you see.

[32:53] And every step of the way, Jonah has these opportunities to pray. And he waits until he is in the belly of the whale.

and certain death. He waits until then to pray. Well, I tell you what, Jonah, perfect illustration of us. are you hiding from God about something or unwilling to do his will? Have you said no to him?

Refusing to obey? Refusing to submit to God? And you thought you could get away with it?

Somehow? And maybe a number of times you thought about praying, thought about getting on your knees, thought about repenting, but you did not.

Listen, how things might have been in your life. But here's the good news. God is not through with you.

[34:12] God is not through with you. You can renew your submission to him. Jonah did. Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God. Second, this is what repentance looks like.

Not only renew your submission to God, but review your situation apart from God.

Review your situation. Take stock. Take inventory. Take a look at where you are. Honestly. That's what Jonah did. In fact, that's the first thing we see in his prayer.

In verse two, I cried out to the Lord because of my situation. Because of where I find myself now. I mean, his eyes were open.

Now, he knew he was going to die. It's not like it didn't occur to him if they threw him overboard that he might drown to death. And when the fish swallowed him up, it's not like Jonah didn't think in his mind, well, you know, I'm done for.

[35 : 19] What I'm talking about is reviewing your situation in correlation to your spiritual condition. That I am here because of where I am with God.

You know, we are usually in denial when it comes to our true spiritual condition. Not so with Jonah. He said, I cried unto the Lord because of my affliction. In fact, he described it, the belly of Sheol. As he looked at his situation, he finally realized just exactly where he was. We're usually in denial when it comes to our true spiritual condition.

And the correlation with our physical or life condition. We sometimes refuse to see that the two are connected.

[36 : 24] And things are happening in my life because of my disobedience, because of my running from God. And we need to review our situation.

Jonah finally did. He realized his dire situation. He knew he was as good as dead. And from Jonah's vantage point, he was dead.

He cried out of the belly of Sheol, not out of the belly of a whale. He didn't say that. He said, out of the horrifying belly or heart of hell itself. He's saying, all hope is gone.

God. And sometimes God will bring you to the brink of death itself to get your attention. You know, a great New Testament illustration of this is Luke 15.

And the story that Jesus told, the parable that he told of the prodigal son, probably one of the most familiar parables in all of the Bible. And you know the story, you know it quite well, but you know what my favorite line is in that story?

[37 : 38] It is when the prodigal son said, or when it said of him, it said this, and when he came to himself, that's the most significant phrase in that entire parable, he came to himself.

He reviewed his situation, his father. You know the story, he took his inheritance and spent it all in riotous living.

He lived the way he wanted to live, in sin and every other conceivable thing. It's all gone, and now he's there in with the pigs eating their slop.

and the Bible says, and he came to himself. He realized where he was. He reviewed his situation apart from God, apart from the father, and he put that in contrast to where he should be.

He said, if I was in my father's house, this and this and this, and then he said, I will return to my father's house.

[38 : 54] See, that's a perfect illustration here. This is Jonah reviewing his situation. So, what does true repentance look like? It's when you renew your submission to God, and you review your situation apart from God, and then third, you recognize your security, your real security is with God.

You realize that your security is with God. Look at verse 3 in this prayer. For you, that's what you ought to pay attention to, you cast me into the deep.

You is capital you, that's God. You, God, cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the floods surrounded me, all your billows and your waves passed over me, Jonah's sinking down into the sea.

Then I said, I have been cast out of your sight, yet, we could put a little parenthesis in there, we could add something, yet, I know that's not true.

I'm not out of your sight, because I can see you. I will look again toward your holy temple. The waters surrounded me, even to my soul.

[40 : 27] The deep closed around me. Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains, the very feet of the mountains, roots of the mountains.

The earth with its bars closed behind me forever. Yet, and we could add in parentheses, Yet, you were there.

Still. You were there. You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. This is beautiful.

He's certainly going a bit further and describing, reviewing his situation with point here is that God is there with him.

God is his security. He said, you, God, put me here. This is not a complaint. It's an acknowledgement. You've done this.

You cast me into the deep, into the very heart of the sea, to the roots of the mountains, in this watery dungeon, behind these bars of the earth.

[41 : 44] Very descriptive. Like iron prison doors. Closed, he said. Forever. You did this, God.

It's not a complaint. Jonah's not shaking his fist at God. He's acknowledging that this is God's work in his life.

God's But then notice the word yet twice there in the text. Verse four, yet, though you did this, yet I will look again toward your holy temple.

I will look to you. Verse six, yet you have brought up my life from the pits, O Lord, my God.

See, you put me here, God, yet you are still here with me. You know, Jonah has finally recognized the truth of Psalm 139.

[42:52] Something that he should have thought of when he went to Joppa to sail to Tarshish. The psalmist asks, where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee? from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in hell, shield, behold, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there, your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

That's what I think, Jonah, finally remembered. See, listen, we talk a lot about this big fish, but the big fish was not Jonah's security.

The big fish did not save Jonah. You say, well, that's what this was all about, this big fish that God prepared and saved him. The fish saved Jonah. well, the fish didn't save him.

[44:07] The big fish, the great fish did not preserve Jonah's life. God did. God did that because he was there with him.

God was his security. See, listen, the fish, the great fish was not his security. God was. The great fish was just God's provision for the moment.

And listen, God's provision is not our security. God is. He is. And then one last thing. Remember your salvation from God.

That's number four. That's what repentance looks like. Renew your submission to God. Review your real situation apart from God.

Recognize your security is with God and him alone. And remember your salvation from God. Verse seven.

[45:11] When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord. About time, Jonah. And my prayer went up to you.

It's high time you did that, Jonah. into your holy temple. Now, folks, I really believe this is the way to true repentance.

Jonah saw his situation. He saw his dire situation. Then, Jonah saw God in his situation.

God and forgot all about his situation. He saw God and God alone.

And then Jonah offers this personal testimony in verse eight. Those who regard worthless idols forsake their mercy, their own mercy, the mercy of God.

[46:19] What's Jonah saying here? In a sense, Jonah chose the path of an idolater. He put whatever it was before God and he refused to obey God.

That's idolatry. And so Jonah is saying, I thought that I could run from God and that I could hide from God, that I could disobey God and get away with it. And so when I chose that path, disobedience, I lost sight of my salvation.

I forgot it. My true salvation. How fitting. How so real to our own experience.

You get away from God and disobey God and you go in a path away from God and one of the first things you forget is your salvation. that's why we sometimes have people walk the aisle again and get baptized again because they got so far away from God they forgot they were saved.

And Jonah forgot his salvation and with that he realized, remembered, that he lost the joy of his salvation. And he lost all the blessings of his salvation.

[47:45] See, Jonah is repenting here. That's what this prayer is all about. He's repenting. And the proof of his repentance comes in verse 9. Look at it.

But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving. This is his repentance. He's going to offer up a sacrifice. Now, he can't build a little fire there on the tongue of the whale, you know, and offer up a little burnt offering or anything.

He can't do that. And so the only thing he's got left to him is to offer up his thanksgiving. That's his sacrifice. And it is him saying, God, I'm serious. I'm fully repenting.

I'm returning to worship. True worship of you. And he offered up the voice of his thanksgiving. The only thing he could offer up. And then he says, now look at this, I will pay what I have vowed.

Salvation is of the Lord. he said, you, God, you, you alone are my salvation.

[48:56] You're my salvation, my only salvation. And God, I forgot about it. Now I remember. I remember that you, God, are my God and my salvation.

And so, I will obey you. I will serve you. This is complete repentance. And so, you know, when Paul gave a testimony of his ministry to, in Acts chapter 26, he told how he preached to both Jews and Gentiles.

And this is what he preached. He said, that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds, he said.

Give proof of your genuine repentance by the things you do, your deeds, your works. And that's what Jonah did. And when the fish vomited Jonah out onto the dry ground, Jonah hit the ground running, literally, and went to Nineveh and obeyed God.

So, we have to ask ourselves, each of us, am I unwilling? Have I been unwilling to serve God?

[50:27] In this area, in this area, in this place, in this thing, in that? Am I unwilling? Have I been disobedient?

Are you running from God? Are you? Then take heart. God is gracious.

God will go sometimes to extremes in your life to turn you around and to get you going with the way He wants you to go.

God is not above going to great extremes because God is in the business of restoring disobedient servants.

He's in the business of that. Don't think of that as a bad thing. that is a testimony of His grace.

Repent and obey Him.

[51:34]