

Jonah Flees

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[0:00] You can be opening your Bibles this morning to the Old Testament book of Jonah.

! Jonah. Jonah. Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah. And just before Micah, that's page 1,251 in my Bible, though that probably won't help you.

I'm not trying to insult anybody, but it's pretty clear that most of us are not as familiar with the placement of the books, the order of the books in the Old Testament as we are in the New.

It's just natural. We're New Testament Christians. We spend a whole lot more time reading the New Testament than we do the Old. And besides that, there are more books in the Old. And a lot of them are small books like this one, the book of Jonah.

And I'm going to spend several Sunday mornings preaching through this marvelous book in the Bible. Very well-known book of the Bible.

[1:09] In fact, let me just say a few things about the book of Jonah before we get started this morning. First place, of the twelve minor prophets, and Jonah is one of the twelve minor prophets in the Old Testament.

We call them minor prophets for various reasons. But of the twelve minor prophets, Jonah, I think you would agree with me, is the most well-known of the twelve. And I would even go further to say that Jonah is the most popular.

At least it is with kids. The story, you know, of Jonah and the whale and so forth. So it's well-known, very popular. I think you would agree with that. And yet, there is, strictly speaking, only one prophecy given in the book of Jonah.

Just one. As a matter of fact, it takes up the space of just one half of one verse in the entire book.

Now, I know it's a small book, and yet maybe you hadn't realized there's only one prophecy here.

It's in chapter 3 and verse 4. And here's the prophecy. Yet forty days, and none of us shall be overthrown. That's it. That's the only prophecy we have that, strictly speaking, I think there's obviously other prophetic word given to us.

[2:39] In fact, in that sense, the entire book is prophetic. It's the inspired word of God. But regarding the actual prophecy of a prophet, it's just one half of one verse.

And yet, it's the most well-known of the minor prophets. And I think the most popular. Second, though, others have prophesied to the Gentiles.

That is, issued prophecies related to Gentiles. Others in the Old Testament have done that. Jonah is the only one who actually spoke directly to them person to person.

That is, in their presence. Which is kind of interesting. And, you know, as we shall see, not necessarily this morning, but as we go along in our study, we're going to see that that probably was not the safest thing to do for Jonah.

Possibly one of the reasons why he didn't want to go. Third, and these are just some interesting things about Jonah, kind of set up our study of the book.

[3:43] Third, Jonah is the only Old Testament prophet from Galilee. Now, we don't learn that from the book of Jonah.

You have to go to 2 Kings chapter 14 and verse 25. We'll not turn there, but just as a reference for you. As a matter of fact, the only other place in the Old Testament where Jonah is mentioned.

And we learn, though, from that passage that Jonah was from Galilee. And he's the only prophet that we know about in the Word of God that came from Galilee.

Now, is that interesting? Well, I think it's interesting because you might remember in John chapter 7 and verse 50, there Nicodemus stands in the Sanhedrin.

That's kind of like the Jewish parliament of the day. And he stands and gives somewhat of a defense for Jesus. And the Jewish leaders, others in the Sanhedrin, they respond to him by saying,

Are you also from Galilee?

[4:43] And then they say this to Nicodemus, Search and look. That is, search the Bible and look. For no prophet ever arose or has arisen from Galilee.

Isn't that interesting? And yet Jonah is from Galilee. Perhaps they forgot about Jonah. Or maybe he just didn't count for them.

I mean, he was a disobedient prophet, obviously. If you know anything about the book of Jonah, you know that. But I think probably more true is the fact that Jonah's only real claim to fame is that, through his prophecy, the salvation of an entire city of Gentiles was the result.

So I think that was not something these bigoted Jews would hold in high regard. So they just kind of forgot about Jonah. But he was from Galilee.

There are just some interesting facts. But let me tell you a few other things about Jonah. Fourth, Jonah was the only prophet to conceal his message. Or at least he tried to.

[5:51] And then a couple other things even more significant. Jonah is the only prophet mentioned by the Lord Jesus Christ by name.

And even more significantly, Jonah is the only prophet that Jesus likened to himself. The only one. So Jonah was a significant prophet. I mean, if Jesus mentioned him in that way, then you'd have to agree that Jonah was a significant prophet of the Lord.

But, albeit, we only have half of a verse of prophecy. But the message of the book of Jonah is very, very significant.

Very significant. It's not just a childhood story. Something you just tell to your kids. You know, a, quote, whale of a story kind of thing.

[6:53] It's not just that. Much, much more than that. Now, you should also know that the book of Jonah is hotly debated among theologians.

Hotly debated. It has been for centuries. Many liberal and even moderate theologians claim that Jonah was just a myth. The book of Jonah is just a myth. That is, it's just fiction.

And there are many of them that have charged that Jonah should not even be included in the canon of inspired scripture.

There's some of them who have that thrown out. It's taken out. And primarily because of that part of the story where Jonah is actually swallowed by a whale, kept alive in the whale. Whale's belly and so forth.

And they just can't stomach that. Pardon the pun. Well, I don't think God can stomach them. Neither can I. Because, see, I really believe, and the evidence, the biblical evidence is pretty clear.

[7:55] I think there's plenty of support for this. That Jonah was a real man. Real prophet of the Lord. With a real story. That is, the book of Jonah is a real story. Historically accurate. Not some fiction.

Some myth. And the things that we read about here in the book of Jonah really happened. That is, it's real history. Real history. And a real message for us today.

The book of Jonah. All right, let's get to it. Jonah, chapter 1. And I'm going to read the entire chapter. Now, the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid, and every man cried out to his God and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load.

[9:22] But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. So the captain came to him and said to him, What do you mean, sleeper?

Arise, call on your God. Perhaps your God will consider us so that we may not perish. And they said to one another, Come, let us cast lots that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.

So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, Please tell us, for whose cause is this trouble upon us?

What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and what people are you? So he said to them, I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, that's Yahweh, the God of heaven,

who made the sea and the dry land.

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. Then they said to him, What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?

[10:39] For the sea was growing more tempestuous. 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.

Nevertheless, the men rode hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 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. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows.

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. All right, there's chapter 1 of Jonah.

And we're going to get all the way through to the end of it, except for one verse. I'm going to save the last verse for next time as we move into chapter 2.

[11:53] All right. So, here is Jonah. Here is this story, this strange story, I think you would admit.

Famous story. Jonah the prophet. And especially that part of the chapter where, you know, he's thrown out into the sea and the whale swallows him.

Now, we're going to understand what God has to say to us in this chapter. We're going to need to identify the three principal characters of the story.

There are three of them. Three key characters. Three personalities in the story. Who are they?

Well, there's Jonah, of course. And then there are the sailors.

And then third, there is Yahweh God. Those three key personalities or characters stand out very clearly in this text that I just read a moment ago.

[12:58] And they all come together in an amazing way to teach us some very important things.

Now, Jonah represents us in a sense, in a very, very real sense.

Jonah represents the believer, albeit a very poor one. But he's a believer, a true believer, a true follower, believer of the one true God.

All right. So Jonah represents the believer. Now, I will also tell you that he represents Jesus. But that part of the story will enter into our discussion this morning.

But we'll speak more of that at another time. But he does represent Jesus. But for our purposes this morning, primarily, we have Jonah, the prophet, representing the believer.

The believer. And as a prophet, as a believer, he then represents a servant of God. Okay? And then we have the sailors. The sailors, on the other hand, represent not the believer, but the unbeliever.

[14:06] Very clearly. They're pagans. They are Phoenician sailors. They are idol worshipers. We have them a little bit later in the story praying to various gods and so forth.

And so they represent the unbeliever, don't they? Very, very clear. The sinner, we should say. The sinner that is separated from God. Now, the primary character, though, in the story, in the book of Jonah, in fact, the entire book of Jonah, the primary character, the key character in the story is who?

It's not Jonah. Certainly not the sailors. The key character is Yahweh God. All throughout the book. So don't ever, ever take your focus off of God in the story in this book of Jonah.

Or you're going to miss the message. You're going to miss the greater truth. All right. Now, Yahweh God, who does He represent? Himself. He represents Himself.

All right. But now, here's what we need to see. This passage that I read, this first chapter, reveals something very important, very significant about each of the three key characters in the story.

[15:30] About Jonah, about the sailors, about Yahweh God. Three things we should know about each one. And these three things are very instructive.

So let's take the prophet Jonah first. That would be the logical place to begin. Let's take Jonah first. After all, the book is named after him. And I, for one, though I can't really be dogmatic about it, I believe he authored the book.

And then thirdly, it does seem, at least on the surface, that the book is about him. All right. So let's begin with Jonah. And here's what chapter one reveals about Jonah.

It's pretty clear to see. Jonah was, and here's the first point in the outline if you're taking notes, Jonah was the unwilling servant of the Lord.

That's pretty clear, isn't it? If you know anything about Jonah, you know that, don't you? He is the unwilling servant. In fact, we find out about that very clearly in the first three verses of the book.

[16 : 33] It becomes clear. In fact, in the first three verses, we learn two things about Jonah. We first learn about his divine calling. That's clear.

And then we learn about his downfalling. Those two things we need to learn about Jonah as the unwilling servant. His divine calling and then his downfalling.

All right. Let's begin with his divine calling. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. That's what we find out here in verse one. Came to Jonah. He's the son of Amittai.

And the word of the Lord has come to him. And so here he is, Jonah, the son of Amittai. And what is he doing? Well, apparently nothing. That's why God said, arise.

All right. Now, I don't know if his calling as a prophet came before this or came at this time. But it's clear that the word of the Lord is coming to him. And at this time, Jonah is not active.

[17 : 33] That's the implication. Here's Jonah living in Gath Heifer. We know that from 2 Kings 14. That's in Galilee. And he's there, apparently not doing anything.

And God gives him a commission. A calling. And in this calling, God issues three imperatives.

It's not hard to see this. It's just right there in the text. Three imperatives. You could pick them out yourself, couldn't you? Number one, arise. Number two, go.

And number three, cry. Those three things. Arise, go, and cry. This is a divine calling. It's issued by Yahweh God Himself. This is very serious.

It's to be taken very seriously. God is coming directly to Jonah. Now, whether He is speaking to him audibly or speaking to him in his heart, spirit, I don't know.

[18 : 36] I really think God is speaking directly to him. He did that quite a bit with His prophets in the Old Testament. And so here is the Lord, Yahweh God, the one true God, coming to Jonah.

And He issues these three imperatives. Arise, go, and cry. Arise. That is, it's time to get up, time to get moving. It implies inactivity.

And then go, go. This is the commission. And the commission, by the way, is always go. God's commission is always that, is to go. And for Jonah specifically, it was to go to a particular place, to Nineveh.

Nineveh, Nineveh, and He qualifies Nineveh by saying, that great city. By the way, just for your information, and we'll speak more about this as we go along, but Nineveh was the principal city of the nation of Assyria.

A very powerful nation. In fact, I would even call it the world power of the day. And its power was growing as they were conquering peoples and lands. And so Nineveh is the principal city of Assyria.

[19 : 44] And it is a great, great, great city. Huge city. All right. Now, what was Jonah to do regarding Nineveh? He's to go there.

And he's to cry. That's the third part of the imperative. The third imperative. Cry. And specifically, to cry out against it. Now, the word cry, obviously, and you know, does not mean that Jonah's supposed to go there and weep.

You know. Shed tears. Though I think it would be good if he did that. He's to go and preach there. That's the idea here, isn't it? It's very clear. He's to go and preach.

And the substance of his preaching is not given at this point. But it is implied by the word against. He's to go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach against it.

And, of course, the idea is that Jonah is to preach the impending, the certain judgment of God because of their sin. That's what he's to do.

[20 : 50] Now, how do we know that? Because of what God says next. He says, their wickedness has come up before me. All right. So the Ninevites are wicked people.

Very wicked and very cruel, really. All right. So God has a message for Jonah, his prophet, to deliver to the city of Nineveh.

And if we could sum it up in one word, it would be repent. That's his message. Or we might expand upon that and say, turn or burn.

Not a very encouraging message. But this was the message of the Lord to this wicked people there in Nineveh. Repent. Now, let me insert here where this intersects with our life.

Because, you see, Jonah's calling is the same as ours today. It really is. Now, we're not called, not all of us are called to be missionaries as Jonah was called.

[21:54] We're not all, certainly not any of us, called to be prophets in the Old Testament sense as Jonah was called. And in today, in our day, prophets today, in the sense of forth telling, in the sense of pastoring, preaching, we're not all called to be preachers like I have been called.

And yet, I say to you, dear people, that we are all called to go. All of us. To go in various ways, different places, and different methods.

We're all called to go. We as a church are called to go. And we are called to go and cry. In a sense, preach, in the generic sense of that word.

To preach to a world that is lost in sin and under the certain judgment of a holy God if they will not repent. That's what we're called to do.

And what are we doing about that? Each of us. Well, what did Jonah do? Well, what does the Bible tell us? The Bible tells us that he was unwilling to go.

[23:02] And the fact is that many of God's people today are unwilling to go. Unwilling to go. And so, here's Jonah.

Unwilling to go. He's the unwilling servant of the Lord. And we have his divine calling, so there's no uncertainty about that. He is to go. But he's unwilling to go.

And so, we not only see his divine calling, but we see his downfalling. Literally. Literally. Verse 3. Look at it. But.

Jonah. That gives you a heads up on what's about to happen, though you already know the story. But. Jonah. I mean, here's the divine calling of God. God says, Arise, go, and cry to Nineveh, that great city.

But. Jonah. But Jonah arose. At least he did that. Okay. It got one third of the calling.

[24:00] But he didn't get up to go to Nineveh. He got up to go to Tarshish. Look at it. Verse 3. But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it. That is, into the ship to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

And so, it's repeated twice. From the presence of the Lord. Now, let me show you something interesting. And why I have entitled this point, The Down Falling.

Because in the text and in the chapter, we have Jonah going down. Or it's said that he is going down three times.

And it's interesting when you compare that to verse 2 where the Bible says that the wickedness of the Ninevites had come up before God. You see that? Up before God. And then in verse 3, we have Jonah going down.

[25:05] He's going down. Not up. Going down. Now, God is up, metaphorically speaking. He's up. But Jonah is down.

In fact, again, we have in this chapter three references to Jonah going down. It's important to note that. I believe that God's Word is inspired.

And I believe every word is inspired. And the writer of Jonah, I think, was Jonah. And every word was chosen by the Holy Spirit just for a reason.

And so, it's not by happenstance that we have Jonah going down. This is Jonah's down falling. And here is the point, of course.

That every step we take in disobedience to God. Every step is a step down. A step down from the presence of God, from fellowship with God.

[26:08] And this is what we see happening with Jonah. All right. So, Jonah's down falling. First of all, we have Jonah. Or it's said that Jonah went down to sail away from God.

We have Jonah going down to sail away from God. Verse 3. But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down.

There it is. Down to Joppa. Or so Jonah goes down to the nearest port city there on the Mediterranean Sea, nearest to him, there in proximity to Galilee.

He goes down to Joppa. By the way, Joppa still exists today. It doesn't go by Joppa. It goes by the name Jaffa. Joppa. And it is there south of Tel Aviv.

But Joppa, he goes to Joppa. And Joppa, if you were to put a map up there and you were to look at a map, you would see that Joppa is in the opposite direction of Nineveh.

[27 : 15] Nineveh is east and a little north of where Jonah is now. And Jonah goes west.

Goes west. To Joppa. And Jonah, when he gets there, he purchases a ticket for a ship going to Tarshish. And Tarshish is a Phoenician city on the coast of Spain.

On the opposite side of the Mediterranean Sea. How far? Some 2,000 miles. And in a sense, the complete other side of the known world of the day.

In the opposite direction of Nineveh, of course. So here's Jonah. Instead of going to Nineveh, west, he goes east.

To Joppa with the intention of going on to Tarshish. And so God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh. And Jonah sets sail to go more than 2,000 miles in the complete opposite direction.

[28 : 31] He had to go down to do that. Down away from God. Next, Jonah went down into the ship.

He went down to sail. Away from God. And he went down into the ship to hide.

I really believe that's the idea, the implication here. Went down to hide. Verse 3. So he paid the fare and went down. Down into it.

That is, into the ship. And so Jonah is going down into the hold of the ship to hide. And later on, the ship's captain is going to find him there, sleeping, of all things.

In the midst of a raging storm. Now, all of this begs the question, I think has probably come to your mind, at one time or another.

[29 : 31] It begs the question, did Jonah really believe he could go where God could not find him? Or that he could hide where God could not see him? Did Jonah really believe that?

No, I don't think so. Jonah's disobedient, but he's not stupid. He knows he cannot go anywhere to hide where God cannot see him.

Cannot go anywhere where God cannot find him. But he might have been thinking, I will go where God cannot use me.

That's what we need to understand about Jonah fleeing from the presence of the Lord. Not that he could go anywhere where God cannot find him or see him. But he might go somewhere where God could not use him.

And then God would have to go find someone else to do what he wanted done. That's the idea here. Jonah headed for the opposite end of his inhabited world, thinking that he would be so far away from Nineveh that God would be forced to find somebody else.

[30 : 50] That's the idea. In fact, Jonah was so committed to removing himself from God's plan here that he was even willing to die. And that leads us to the third step down for Jonah.

Though the word down doesn't appear, the idea is down. Jonah went down to sail. He went down into the ship. And then Jonah went down into the sea to die.

Didn't he? That's what he chose. In verse 12 it says, and this is Jonah speaking, Pick me up and throw me into the sea.

Down into the sea. And when he got there, he went down, didn't he? Down into the sea to die. Jonah went down, down, down.

And every step of disobedience to God's call upon your life, no matter what it is. And there are multiple things God calls us to do.

[31 : 54] Every step of disobedience is a step down from fellowship with God. And you have to ask yourself, To what lengths do we sometimes go to avoid God's call upon our lives?

Sometimes we go to great lengths to avoid that call. Not thinking we can just get away from God, but thinking that we could put ourselves in an irreversible position so that in order for God to do what He's called us to do, He's going to have to go get somebody else.

So Jonah represents the unwilling servant. Second, as we consider the sailors, we see the sailors represent the unbelieving sinner.

The unbelieving sinner. Jonah represents the unwilling servant. The sailors represent the unbelieving sinner. Now, verses 4 and 5 together introduce us to the sailors.

Verse 4, look at it. But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

[33 : 19] Now, let's stop right there a minute, because this was a very typical thing to happen on the Mediterranean Sea still today. In fact, you might remember that the same thing happened to the

Apostle Paul when he was being transported by ship ultimately to Rome to stand trial before Caesar.

And at some point in their journey, the Bible says a great storm. In fact, it calls it a Eurachlodon. That's kind of the Greek translation.

It comes right on into the English, the most English text. And it's just referring to a kind of freak storm that just comes up suddenly, out of nowhere, and it's not something that the sailors could predict necessarily in that day.

And that's what we kind of have happening here. But I would be quick to add that from the text, we understand here in Jonah that this was no natural storm.

This was supernatural. And we know that by what the Bible says. The Bible says here that the Lord sent, sent out a great wind.

[34:31] And the word, you may kind of lose some of its shine in the English, and some translations do render it a little bit differently. But the idea here is the literal meaning is that God threw it out there.

He hurled it. It's like God just wrapped up a big storm and threw it out there where Jonah and the ship and the sailors were sailing.

A Eurachlodon. And yet this is a supernatural one. God hurled it out there, this great wind and this mighty tempest. And the result was that the ship was about to be broken up into pieces.

This was no minor thing. This was a tremendous, a severe storm at sea. And then what happens next? And here's where we're introduced to the sailors.

Verse 5, Then the mariners, by the way, mariners is the Hebrew word for salt. You wonder where we get this term, old salts, from this word right here.

[35:40] These old salts, these experienced sailors, the Bible says were afraid. And that also loses its shine in the English.

They were terrified. Beside themselves with fear. And why would they be? Because they're experienced sailors. Well, it reinforces the idea that this was a storm like they had never seen before.

And it looked hopeless. They had come face to face with certain death and they were afraid. And how they react to that, the Bible tells us here, is where they symbolize or represent the lost center. Sinners. These sailors had come face to face with their mortality and certain death. And they put their trust in several things to get them out.

And that represents the lost center today. In the first place, just like these sailors, sinners put their trust in religion.

[36:59] That's represented right here in the text. Verse 5, what does it say? Every man cried out to his God. These sailors suddenly got very religious.

Now, there were a lot of gods that they worshipped. And in a sense, each of the sailors had their own God that they usually prayed to. And so, just a plethora of gods.

And so, here's what they do first. You know, they're faced with their mortality, faced with certain doom and death. And they all do the first thing that comes natural to them.

They get religious. And so, they cry out to their own God. And that's exactly what lost, unbelieving sinners do today. They trust in religion to get them out.

I remember several years ago hearing Bob Hope once joked, he said, I joined the Baptist Church and the Jewish synagogue and the Islamic temple.

[38:02] Joined all three because I did not want to miss heaven on a technicality. And we laugh at that, but how sad, really. I don't know that Bob Hope really believed that. He was a comedian.

He was trying to be funny. But the point is, of course, and you know, that there is no God but Yahweh God who can save. There is no Savior but Jesus who can save us.

And so, religion will not work. And yet, lost, unbelieving, men and women still today and have since the beginning of time have been trusting in religion to get them out of the storm of life.

to get them out of certain doom. And it won't work. So, religion will not work. So, what else do they try? Well, second, sinners put their trust in reformation.

And it's so true. And it's interesting how these sailors exemplify that. In verse 5 it says, after they tried to pray to their own gods, verse 5 says, they threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load.

[39:24] And it's symbolic of lost sinners trying to reform themselves. Trying reformation. You know, they try to lighten the load.

Or, you know, that load of sin. The guilt of sin. Trying to lighten the load. And so, to avoid a shipwrecked life, they try to throw out the things that are weighing the ship down.

And so, they quit lying. Throw that overboard. Quit dishonest things.

Stealing. Other kinds of dishonesty. Throw that overboard. They quit harmful habits and activities in their life.

Throw that overboard. Trying to lighten the ship. Lighten the load. Remove the load of sin and guilt. Throw these things overboard. They quit immoral activities.

[40:28] Throw that overboard. Just cast it all overboard to lighten up the load. So, you know, the unbeliever says, I'm going to clean up my life. You know, at some point and at multiple times in an unbeliever's life, that unbeliever will come face to face with mortality.

Something will remind him or her of their mortality. And, you know, the doom. The fear.

The storm they believe is coming. The judgment day or however they might conceive of it. And so, what do they do? Try to reform. Try to get rid of the things that they believe might be dragging them into hell.

And so, they trust in that. But it won't work. It won't work. Not religion. Not reformation. And so, what else do they try? Sinners then put their trust in resolution.

That is, they just get resolved or resolute to do better. It's kind of the opposite side of the get rid of the junk and insert into the life good things and work hard at that.

[41:50] And that's exemplified by these sailors in verse 13. The men rode hard to return to the land but they could not.

So, it didn't work, did it? Rode hard. It's a picture of toil and sweat and even tears. And so many today are trying that route.

They're thinking that somehow God will reward their sincerity. Their desire to do good and to do better. And so, they resolve themselves.

You know, especially this time of the year we kind of come up with New Year's resolutions. Some people do that thinking that that will appease God and please God and maybe they'll be alright in the end.

And so, I'm just not trying hard enough. So, I'll try hard. It makes me remember the old hymn Rock of Ages and one line goes like this, Could my tears forever flow?

[42:54] Could my zeal no weakness know? These for sin could not atone. Thou must save and thou alone.

none of these methods work. Not for these old salts. Not for any sinners today. The storm is still raging. In fact, we get the idea from the text that it's not only raging, but it's intensifying.

Getting worse and worse and worse and their doom is more and more certain as it is for sinners today apart from Christ.

those who try religion, reformation, resolution, nothing works until sinners put their trust in revelation.

Revelation. I mean God's divine revelation. His word. because it's God's divine revelation that provides the one and only remedy for lostness, for condemnation, and it's Jesus Christ.

[44:20] Think about these old salts or this whole scene. They've tried religion and reformation and resolution. That hasn't worked.

And then they eventually listen to God's prophet. They hear what God's prophet has to say first, but they don't believe that. Eventually they trust it.

You see, Jonah is the prophet of the Lord, and in a sense God gave Jonah a revelation, a remedy. Jonah then gave that revelation to these sailors.

And that revelation was given to them for their good, for their salvation, if they would believe it and obey it.

Are you confused? What was the divine revelation Jonah gave to them? verse 12. Pick me up and throw me into the sea.

[45:33] Then the sea will become calm for you. That's what Jonah told them. They were out of their wits with fear. Nothing they tried worked.

and Jonah says, here's what you must do. The only remedy. Pick me up, throw me overboard, and the sea will be calm, become calm for you.

Not for me, but for you. This is the remedy. Now, that means they would be saved. that is Jonah saying, my death will save you.

Do you understand? And we then maybe wonder why Jesus said, in reference to Jonah, he said, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, even so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth.

Speaking of his death, his sacrificial death, his substitutionary death. And so, this is what Jonah is saying to them. This is the revelation of God. Though Jonah didn't think of it as revelation, didn't think of it as prophecy, but he's giving them the remedy.

[47:01] Here's the remedy, the one and only remedy, the only way this sea will be calm for you and you will be saved is this, my death, my substitutionary death.

God that's what we're learning here and what these sailors were to learn. At first, now, these sailors refused to trust the revelation. They refused it.

And so, they tried everything else they knew to try. And none of that worked. And finally, they trusted God's one and only provision for their salvation, the death of Jonah, a substitutionary death. verse 15, so they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea and the sea ceased from its raging. Literally, suddenly, it just stopped that quick.

That's supernatural as well. Now, listen, here's where Jonah represents the Lord Jesus Christ, if you haven't gotten that yet.

[48:09] And the parallel is unmistakable. The only hope for sinners is the cross of Jesus Christ.

His atoning death for their sin. His substitutionary death in order for you to live, Jesus had to die. In order for the sailors to live, Jonah had to die. That's salvation. Let's continue and finish up with our focus on the principal characters in our story.

All these come together and really culminate with the third and final character, key character, and that would be Yahweh God.

And so Jonah represents the unwilling servant. The sailors, they represent the unbelieving sinner. And finally, there's Yahweh God and He represents Himself.

[49:20] He represents or is the unstoppable Savior. Unstoppable Savior. God is going to save and He will not fail in that.

ultimately, we're going to see that He's not going to fail in that in regard to the Ninevites. He's unstoppable in His grace toward them.

But here we see it in the sailors. See, I believe that these old salts, these sinners, were really saved that day.

Not just physically, but spiritually. Look at the text. In fact, let me start with verse five again.

The latter part of it, but Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So here's the storm and Jonah, he's down in the hold of the ship asleep.

[50:28] So the captain came to him and said to him, what do you mean? Sleeper, what's this? Get up, he said to him.

Call on your God. We've all been up here praying to our own God. You get up here and join us and pray to your God. We don't know whose God is going to save us.

Maybe it's going to be yours. What are you doing down here sleeping? Get up here. You pray to your God. They didn't even know who his God was yet, but they're going to. He said, perhaps your God will consider us so that we may not perish.

And they said to one another, come let us cast lots. Let's throw the dice or use the straws or whatever it was. I don't really know what it was. They're going to cast lots, find out who's to blame here, where the problem is.

And the lot fell on Jonah, didn't it? God worked through a pagan practice to reveal to them who the problem was, though I think they already suspected it.

[51:35] You know, they don't even know who this Jonah is, and he's down here sleeping in this storm. He's got to be the one. Get up here. All right, so the lot falls on him. They say to him, and they throw to him all these questions.

Who are you? Where are you from? Who are your people? What's going on here? And 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.

What an incredible statement he made to these sailors. I serve the one true God, the only God, the one who made the land and the sea.

And their reaction is quite natural. Men were exceedingly afraid, and they 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.

There's more that Jonah told them than we have recorded here. He told them about all of this. God had sent him to Nineveh.

[52:37] He was to preach to them, repent, trust the one true God, or you're dead, you're doomed, and I'm fleeing from that. He told them all of that. And they said, what shall we do that the sea may be calm for us?

For the sea was growing more tempestuous. And he said, pick me up, throw me into the sea, and the sea will be calm for you. And they didn't believe it, and so they rode harder, tried to get to land on their own, in their own strength.

We've already talked about that. It didn't work. And so, therefore, they cried out to the Lord and said, God, don't blame us for this. Don't put this man's blood on our hands, but we don't know anything else to do.

We've tried everything else. And so, they picked him up, and they threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased its raging.

Suddenly, what an incredible illustration of the truth about the one true God.

[53:48] And I submit to you that coupled with what Jonah had already shared with them, and then this testimony of the reality that this is the one true God, God, or this could not happen this way, because of that, they became believers.

And it's verse 16 that helps us understand that. Look at it. Then the men, what does it say? They feared the Lord.

They feared the Lord. And by the way, the word Lord here is the word Yahweh. They didn't fear their gods or any other god or any unknown god. They feared the Lord, Yahweh God.

That means they began to worship Him as the one true God. They feared Him, Yahweh.

Then it says, and they, what does it say? they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, to Yahweh God.

[55:08] That means they dealt with their sins before God. That's what that means, offer sacrifice.

It's to offer sacrifice for sin. They worshiped the one true God, He's the one. And they offered a sacrifice to Him, acknowledging that He would forgive their sin.

And then what? They took vows. They took vows. What does that mean? It's covenant language.

They entered into a covenant, a point of allegiance to Him as their God. And they affirmed their obedience to Him.

Yahweh God. The one true God. What a testimony to the unstoppable saving grace of God. To the unstoppable power of His Word.

[56:14] through His servant Jonah, though Jonah didn't know He was preaching, and then through his death. And the sea ceased testifying to the one true God.

God's unstoppable. Jonah, an unwilling missionary who would rather die than see anybody come to faith in Him, to God, and yet even in his drowning, a boat full of unbelieving sailors, come to faith, are saved.

It is as if God was saying to Jonah, and to us by the way, I can use you to do my will even if you don't want to.

my desire to save is unstoppable, even by your disobedience.

Thank you.