

Jonah: A Rather Fishy Story

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Date: 07 July 2013

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[0 : 00] Today's scripture is found in Jonah and is printed in your bulletin. Please follow along as I read. Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.

Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim it, the message I give to you. Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now, Nineveh was a very large city, and it took three days to go through it.

Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown. The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh.

By the decree of the king and his nobles, do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything. Do not let them eat or drink, but let people and animals be covered with sackcloth.

[1 : 14] Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent, and with compassion, turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.

When God saw what they did, and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented, and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. But to Jonah, this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.

He prayed to the Lord, Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? This is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live. But the Lord replied, Is it right for you to be angry? Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city.

There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade, and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head and to ease his disappointment.

[2 : 29] Oh, discomfort. And Jonah was very happy with the plant. But at dawn the next day, God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered.

When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die and said, It would be better for me to die than to live.

But God said to Jonah, Is it right for you to be angry about the plant? It is, he said. And I'm so angry, I wish I were dead. But the Lord said, You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow.

It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and also many animals?

This is the reading of God's Word. You may be seated. Well, good morning, Watermark. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Graham, and I've been told I should introduce myself as a South African.

[3 : 40] So that anyone needs translation into English, then please sit next to another South African. Today I'm going to be introducing a series to you, which we're going to be covering over the summer.

It's a series on the prophets. Now, prophets were ordinary people with an extraordinary function, and that was to speak on behalf of God.

And the first prophet we're going to encounter today is Jonah. Now, you probably all know the story of Jonah and the whale. Well, one day, a teacher in third grade was teaching in her class about whales.

And she said, It's impossible for a man to be swallowed by a whale, because even though a whale is a very large animal, it has a small throat, and it can't swallow a man.

So there's this little girl in the class, and she thinks about it, and she sticks up her hand, and she says, But Miss Jonah was swallowed by a whale. And the teacher looks at her and says, It is impossible for a whale to swallow a man.

[4 : 42] And the little girl's not really satisfied with the answer, and she says, Well, when I get to heaven, I'll ask Jonah myself. And the teacher says, Well, what happens if Jonah went to hell?

And the little girl says, Well, then you ask him. Okay, I'll let that go. Anyway. Okay. So. Jonah. Okay, I'm going to ask you to do something this morning. I'm going to ask you to vote for me by raising your hand. I'm going to ask you if you think Jonah is fact, it was a true story, it really happened, real people, real events, or it's just a story.

Maybe it's got a good message behind it, but it's just a story. So can we do that? Hands up if you think it's a true story, it's fact. Okay, good. Hands up if you think it's fiction, just a story.

Okay. Hands up if you don't like putting your hands up in church. Okay. Good. Actually, how we answer that question shows us how we feel a little bit about God.

[5 : 47] In a recent survey, it said that 90% of people believe in God. Now that is a meaningless statistic. The real question we need to be asking is, what kind of a God do you believe in?

Do you believe he is cruel or kind? Does he care or is he indifferent? Is he close or distant? Is he weak or powerful? Is he active in our world or is he just watching? And Jonah shows us something of God's character.

I have a colleague at work, and we were discussing a recent bit of news about, it happened to be about a South African who shot his girlfriend. Now I just want to, I don't know if you guys know the piece of news, but I just want to make it clear, not all South Africans shoot their girlfriends.

Okay, sorry. Just, but we were talking about, and it's a rather depressing piece of news, and we were talking about this, and slowly we got on the topic of God. And she said, well, I'm a complete atheist.

[6 : 57] And I said to her, well, where is your hope? And she thought about it, and she said, well, I guess it's really sad. I don't have a hope. I think my only hope is, I can't wait until we wipe each other out, and then the panda will be king.

That's what she said. And I said, well, actually, you are a woman of faith. And she said, no, I'm not. I just told you I'm an atheist. And I said, well, I think it takes more faith to believe that something made itself out of nothing than to believe someone made it and put it there.

And anyway, so the conversation carried on. And she said to me, well, you don't really believe stories in the Bible like Noah's Ark and Jonah being swallowed by a whale.

And I said, well, actually, I believe all eight nature miracles in the book of Jonah. And my favorite one is not the whale. It's the worm. Because, you know, whales are intelligent animals.

Men can train whales to do things. But it takes God to tell a worm what to do. And at this, she kind of said, oh, walk back to her desk. And that was the end of the conversation. But I'd like to give you a little brief overview of the book of Jonah.

[8 : 06] And for me, Jonah is one of those stories I just wish Hollywood would get hold of. It's got everything. It's got wild and reckless characters. It's got, you know, special effects just waiting to happen.

But instead, we get movies like World War Z. Okay. Anyway, Melin, that's for you. Jonah would be better. All right. But here's Jonah.

He's a prophet. And he gets a message from God. And God says to him, Jonah, I want you to go to the city of Nineveh and tell them in 40 days, they're going to be destroyed because of their wickedness.

Now you need to understand something a little bit about Nineveh. It was the capital of Assyria. And the Assyrians were notorious because of their wickedness and their cruelty.

They would go in and take over smaller little nations. And they would be particularly cruel to those people. They invented this method of torture of a stake.

[9 : 06] And wherever they went in, they would take the people and impale them on the stake and wait for them to die. So these are the people Jonah is sent to.

And Jonah runs away. He runs down. He gets aboard a ship. And he jumps on the ship. And he's sailing out to sea. And suddenly something happens. This huge storm comes up. Now I'm talking T8, T10 kind of stuff, right? This is wild. The waves are raging. And the crew and the sailors are starting to get really panicky here. And they start throwing the cargo overboard. Now you must be really scared when you start throwing your cargo overboard. But they were. And then that's not working. So they decide, everybody pray. Stop. If you've got a guard, pray to him. Let's just do the shotgun approach. Maybe one of us will get lucky. Everyone pray. And then the captain goes down deck. And he finds Jonah asleep. He's sleeping through the whole thing.

[10 : 03] Jonah, wake up. What are you doing? You've got to pray. And then they cast lots to sea. Because they're looking at the storm. And it's just the most unnatural thing that they've experienced.

Now sailors have gone through many storms. But this is just something unnatural. So there must be a reason for it. So they cast lots. And the lot comes to Jonah. Jonah, who are you?

What have you done? And then Jonah tells him. He goes, I'm a Hebrew. I'm Jewish. And I come from Israel. And I serve the living God.

The maker of heaven and earth. And they're like, then they're scared, right? And they know he's running away from God. And they said, Jonah, what do we need to do? And Jonah says, you need to throw me overboard.

It's like, Jonah, have you got a death wish or something? Have you seen the storm out there? And he says, you need to do it. So they're not so keen on this idea. It's kind of like murder in their eyes. So they said, God, please hold us innocent.

[11 : 02] Take Jonah. They throw him overboard. Jonah falls into the sea. Waves are splashing around him. And he starts to sink below the surface. And at that moment, the storm clears up.

Comes a beautiful day like it was this morning. Sun comes out. The wind stops. Everything dies. Now, if you were one of those sailors on the boat, you'd probably be freaked out a little bit, right? Probably a little bit scared. And that's exactly how they were, right? The fear of God was on them. This was weird. But meanwhile, Jonah is sinking down and down and down.

And it says he gets to the roots of the mountains. And his head's wrapped in seaweed. And then God provides a big fish or a whale to come and pick him up. And he's inside this whale for three days and three nights.

After three days and three nights, Jonah prays. And the whale vomits him out onto the land. And then it says, the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.

[12 : 06] Go to Nineveh. Jonah was a little bit more obedient this time. And he went. And Nineveh was a big city, right? So it says it took three days to walk about it.

Jonah walks a day into the city. And he's preaching. In 40 days, God will destroy you. In 40 days, God will destroy you. In 40 days, God will destroy you. And an amazing thing happens. These Assyrians listen to Jonah.

And they start repenting. They start putting on sackcloth and ashes and change their ways. And it starts with these people. And it slowly works its way up to the king. And the king repents.

And he says, listen, we all need to fast. And maybe God will relent. God sees them. And he does. Now, you would think Jonah would probably be a happy man, right?

He wasn't. He was a grumpy, sulky little man. He sees it. I'm not happy with this. And he goes up onto this hill. And he's looking down on the city of Nineveh to see what will happen.

[13 : 06] And he's watching it. And God provides a vine, a leafy plant to grow up overnight. And in the morning, Jonah wakes up. And he's got this beautiful shade of this plant.

But then he sends the worm, which is my favorite part in the story. This little worm comes along, eats the vine. And of course, the vine dies. And then it's scorching hot.

And the wind blows this vine away. And now Jonah's sweating. And he's so angry. And God says to him, Jonah, do you have a right to be angry? I'm so angry I could die.

He is seriously miffed. He's not a happy man. He says, Jonah, why? Why? You know, and he is concerned because he doesn't have shade anymore.

That's his big concern. That's why Jonah is really mad. And he says, Jonah, don't you see? Don't I have a right to be concerned about the people in Nineveh?

[14:05] They have 120,000 children in that city. That's what it means, right? People who don't know the left hand from the right. These weren't dumb adults who didn't know the left. They were children. 120,000 children.

So imagine how big that city was. And the animals, Jonah. Don't I have a right to be concerned about it? Now, like my colleague, the scholars have two big objections to the book of Jonah. They say, one, it's impossible for a man to be swallowed by a whale and survive for three days. And two, they say, it's highly improbable that a whole city will change its ways from one man's preaching.

So let's look at this, all right? Swallowed by a whale or a big fish. In 1921, there was a whaling ship working off the Falkland Islands.

And a whale came up underneath the ship and it knocked the ship and four sailors went overboard. And three of them, they managed to rescue and bring back. But there was one, a certain James Bartlett, who wasn't ever recovered.

[15:15] And the captain wrote in his logbook, he said, James Bartlett swept overboard, presumed dead. A few days later, they managed to catch the whale that had knocked their ship and they brought it up on deck and they were cutting it up.

And inside their belly, they saw something moving. They quickly cut it open and there was James Bartlett. Deep in a coma, but still breathing and still very much alive.

So they took him out, they took him into the captain's cabin, wrapped him in blankets, gave him water. Two days later, James Bartlett came out of his coma, but he was delirious.

He was totally crazy. And anyway, they continued to look after him. After five days, James Bartlett was back to his usual self and he resumed his duties with the rest of the crew on board the ship. And for the rest of his life, he lived pretty normally, except for one thing. Wherever he didn't wear clothes, the clothing didn't cover his body, his skin had been bleached white from the whale's digestive juices.

[16:22] So is it possible that a man can be swallowed by a whale and survive? Well, we have a modern day story that tells it is.

But I want to look at something a bit deeper. But let's look at Jonah. Was he dead or alive in that whale? Okay, I always think in Sunday school, they've always got these pictures of Jonah being thrown overboard and the whales like waiting for him, right?

Have you seen that? That's like, they're just waiting to catch him. But actually, it's not that way. It says he was thrown overboard, the waves came over him and he sank to the roots of the mountain. Now that means the sea floor. It takes about a minute and a half to two minutes to drown. It takes a lot longer than that to sink to the ocean floor.

But there's another clue there. It says, Jonah prayed from Sheol. This is all in chapter two. The place of the departed spirits. It's a Hebrew word. It means the place of the dead.

[17:21] Jonah was dead. And after three days and three nights, he was spat out again and his spirit was reunited with his body.

Now can you think of anyone else that was dead for three days and three nights and was resurrected again? Okay.

This is a beautiful picture of the resurrection. In Jonah. Okay. So let's look at the other thing. It's improbable that a city would repent.

Now Jonah was successful, right? And he preached to these people and it says the whole city repented. And the skeptics listen to that and they say, yeah, come on, go on.

Pull the other one. You know, it's kind of like a little man from Beijing comes to Hong Kong and he preaches and the whole city of Hong Kong sort of changes its evil ways and listen to it.

[18:24] Okay, exactly what you're thinking. You're thinking no ways, right? That's just probably wouldn't happen. That's what the skeptics say. But I want to give you five reasons why it was very probable that the people of Nineveh did repent.

And hopefully it gives us a little bit of insight into why some people respond to God and others don't. Have you ever wondered why two people can hear the same message and one responds to God and the other doesn't?

Well, hopefully this gives a little bit of insight. Number one, the Ninevites were a religious and superstitious people. They had an idea that there was something greater than them, right?

There was a little bit of the fear of God in them. They knew there was something bigger than them and they weren't really sure what it was so they were very superstitious and did certain things to please that God that they didn't really know who it was.

And I find it's the same today, right? It's much easier to speak to people who have some idea about God, have something of the fear of God in their lives already. And number two, the Ninevites were guilty.

[19 : 33] They knew they were bad people, right? They knew that they did wrong. The only thing that stopped them was that they were so big and powerful no other nation had stopped them until God steps into the scene and he says, I will destroy you.

So they knew they were guilty and guilt makes cowards of us all, right? Unless we own up to it, unless we confront it. All right.

Number four, this revival started with the common people. Now you, it's very difficult to fool the common people, right? But it started with the common people and it worked its way up and even reached the king.

This wasn't a situation where the religious powers were forcing it down on the people. This was the people responding. And number four, this one is a little bit of a, it can be argued either way, but I just want you to think with me what we know about James Bartlett.

Now imagine Jonah arrived in the city and his skin had been bleached white as well from being inside this whale. And he says, guys, I've been dead for three days and three nights.

[20 : 42] I think we'd probably listen to him, right? There's the sign of Jonah. Okay, number five, this is the most important thing of it all is that God was behind it.

When God is behind something, things happen. But you know, all this is not the main story of Jonah. We can become so bogged down and, you know, is it possible for a whale to swallow a man?

Could the whole city repent? And we miss the main story of Jonah. We miss the main point. The real question we have to ask ourselves is why did Jonah run away?

Why did he run away? Jonah was very successful. Any evangelist today you told him you're going to go in a city and you're going to preach and everyone's going to repent, they would love that.

They would be absolutely thrilled. But not Jonah. And actually there are three reasons for it. One of them is good and two of them are not so good. but we actually need to know a little bit about Jonah before because the first time we hear about Jonah is not actually in the book of Jonah.

[21 : 54] It's in the book of 2 Kings in chapter 14. Jonah gets this message for the king of Israel, a king called King Jeroboam II.

He was an evil king. It says he did evil in the sight of the Lord. And Jonah gets a message for him to go to this king and tell him that God's going to bless him.

God's going to increase his boundary. He's going to increase his wealth. He's going to increase his reputation. Jonah does this. Now, do you think King Jeroboam became better because of this?

He didn't. He just got worse and worse and worse. And Jonah remembers this. And he's saying, God, I don't want people to take advantage of your mercy again because I'm jealous for your name.

That's a good thing, right? I'm jealous for you. I don't want to see people take advantage of your mercy like King Jeroboam did. And I think there's something inside each one of us.

[22 : 56] We also feel that way when you see people take advantage of God's mercy. Like, they treat it like it's pocket change. Just, oh, thanks God. Oh, yeah, thanks. And Jonah is jealous for God's name.

Now, that's the good reason. And unfortunately, there are two other reasons which are not so good. And the other one is that Jonah is really saying, God, I don't want you to be like this.

I want you to be like how I want you to respond. God, God, I want you to judge them, right?

That's what really Jonah wants, right? He doesn't want them to repent. He wants them to be destroyed. Jonah says, you know, for me, I can run away. I don't have to listen to you, and I want mercy.

You ask me to do something, I run away, I want mercy. But for that city of Nineveh, I want judgment, I want justice. And it's the same for us, right?

[24 : 02] Have you ever done that? You want mercy for yourself, but judgment for others? I'm like that. A few months ago, this was quite a while ago, I was talking to a friend of mine who loves cycling.

And we were talking about Lance Armstrong. Now, you guys know the story of Lance Armstrong. He was a Texan, those dodgy Texans, right? So he was a Texan.

He rode in seven tours de France's and he cheated, he deceived people, and he became very wealthy because, and we were talking about this, and my friend is a passionate, he's passionate about cycling.

I don't know why, but he is, okay? And he was so devastated by this. He was the type of guy who supported Lance Armstrong when everyone else was accusing him of cheating. He was saying, no ways, he didn't do it, you know, he's an honest sportsman.

And then when he came out with a confession, my friend was, he was just totally devastated. And he was like saying, you know, we should just lock Armstrong away and throw away the key. He's that evil, that wicked.

[25 : 06] And we were talking and I said, you know, we all kind of cheat in some way or another. And he said, yeah, but it's different because it was Lance Armstrong's job.

I said, no, no, no, well, do you cheat in your job sometimes, do we? Like, do you take a sick day which isn't really a sick day? Do you help yourself to things which you shouldn't really help yourself to?

And then he looks and he goes, oh, but it's different. Lance Armstrong was very rich. He didn't need to cheat. Okay, so let's think this through. If you're very rich, then you don't need to cheat, right? So I'm going to start cheating.

But it depends. Where do you define that line? We're like, am I rich or am I not rich? That kind of thing. But it's still this essence of judgment for them, mercy for me, right?

When they do it, it's really bad and they should be punished. They should have justice. When I do it, it's actually not so bad. Give me mercy. And, you know, we can think about Hong Kong.

[26 : 06] You know, there was a story about our chief executive just before the elections where he did some illegal structures to his home and I know a lot of people in Hong Kong that have lots of illegal structures and things that they do to their homes that they shouldn't really do.

But he does it and it's terrible. We can't elect that man. He's not honest. He's not right. But we do the same thing. Oh, well, that's mercy for me, right?

That's Jonah. And the friend, this conversation I had with my friend, it ended, he said, we ended up talking about God and he said, well, why doesn't God just get rid of all the bad people and then we can be okay?

You know, there's an assumption in that question. Which side do you think he put himself on, right? Let's get rid of all the bad people. But we think of ourselves, we're the good people and they're the bad people.

Then there's a third reason and this is the most important one. you see, Jonah was looking and he was making God how he wanted him to be and that's idolatry, right?

[27 : 20] Like, we might not be physically making an idol out of wood and stone, a little idol that cannot move, cannot think, cannot talk. If you want to go anywhere, you have to pick it up and take it with you.

We might not be doing that, but we might be creating a mental image of how we want God to be and it happens all the time. It happens when people start a sentence with things like this.

I don't think God is like this. I don't think God would send anyone to hell. If I were God, I wouldn't allow that to happen.

It's kind of like saying, you know, if I would do a better job of being God than God is doing right now.

And you hear it like, there can't be a God. If there was a God, He wouldn't allow earthquakes.

He wouldn't allow tsunamis. He wouldn't allow murderers. He wouldn't allow liars. Oh wait, I'm a liar. Okay, He would allow liars. See how our mind works?

[28 : 24] But the biggest part of Jonah is that he just misses God's compassion and mercy. Jonah is upset over his success.

You know, he doesn't see that God is concerned with people, that God has compassion on people. You know, he says it. He says it. In the words, he says, God, I knew you like this.

I know that you are full of grace and mercy, abounding in love. You relent from bringing calamity.

Slow to anger. It's like, I know you like this, but I just miss the point of it, right?

I miss the fact that you care about people. You care about them. You're concerned about them.

You're even concerned about the animals.

It just misses the heart of God. We can do that, right? Now, Martin Luther once famously said, he said, if I were God, I would have kicked the world to pieces long ago.

[29 : 32] Well, thank God Martin Luther wasn't God, but, you know, we don't understand the patience and the long suffering of God. We miss it.

We can be like Martin Luther. We just want to kick the world to pieces. We miss the fact that God is patient, wanting people to come to him, wanting people to turn to him, and he's waiting patiently. Now, that doesn't mean that God is not just. See, unfortunately, today, there's a lot of people we just want God to be all mercy, all mercy, no justice, no judgment, just all mercy, and we kind of want Santa Claus rather than Jesus Christ.

You know, we want to live how we want to live. We want to treat him how we want to treat him. We ignore him until there's a problem, and then we say, God, come, I need your help. Quickly, I'll say my prayer.

All right, now help me. All right, now bye-bye, and I'll go off, and I'll live exactly how I want to live again, and all the while, we just want God to be with us, pat us on the head and say, now, now, there, there, boys will be boys, and that's it.

[30 : 53] And we just want God to be all mercy, and we forget that he is a God of justice and righteousness, and that makes him holy, even in the city of Nineveh, because in Nineveh, 150 years later, God sent another prophet, a prophet called Nahum.

I hope you hear about Nahum over the summer, and Nahum said, enough is enough, 150 years of mercy and compassion, and they didn't change.

It didn't last, and eventually, God says, enough is enough. It's time for justice, and today, there is nothing left of Nineveh. It's a bunch of rubble and ruins.

Let's go back to Jonah. He ran away because of his past experience. Jonah had been burnt. Okay? He had been burnt.

Also, he thought he knew God's business better than God. And third one could have been that Jonah was scared to go, right?

[32 : 00] He probably knew the reputation of the Assyrians, and he was scared to go, but this is the same guy that said, throw me overboard. So, I don't know if he was scared or not, but he could have been scared. But the real question we have to ask ourselves today is, why are you running away from God?

Now, we might not physically be running away from God, but what is it that God has asked you to do? What is it that God has asked you to change?

What is it that God has asked you to be that you're running away from? Now, there might be some people here today who don't yet believe or don't yet trust Jesus, and he's calling you.

You know he's calling you, and yet you're running, and you're thinking, not now, not now, okay? Or, what will people think of me if I follow this man called Jesus Christ?

Or, maybe it can wait until I'm older when I'm not so busy, but the truth is we're just running. At the beginning of the sermon, I asked you if you believed if Jonah was fact or fiction, but I'm really asking a much deeper question.

[33 : 31] What do you think God is like? Is he good? Is he strong? Can he be trusted? Is he worth it?

Is he worth your life? Is he really God in your life? I have a ball here, okay?

It's a squash ball. Okay, I like to play squash. I'm not very good, but I once played with an American friend of mine and he played racquetball beforehand and we played squash in the same sort of small room and he got in and he took the ball and said, all right, let's go and he took the ball and he just dropped it and if you know anything about a squash ball, it just doesn't bounce.

Okay, so it just went like a little piece of blue tack on the floor. So, it's a very insignificant little ball but I want you to think of this as our home, all right, our little planet and I want you to find yourself on there, okay?

There's Hong Kong and kind of picture yourself on there and I kind of see myself on this tiny little ball and sometimes I just think, you know, my life and my career and my family and my children's education, I need to hold on to them, I need to control them, I kind of, you know what I'm doing?

[34 : 58] I'm making God even a smaller speck than me, this tiny little thing and I'm making him very, very, very small and the whole time I can just imagine God, he's sitting there and he's, Graham, what are you doing?

Now, what are you doing? Just look at me, look at me. Now, suddenly, God is so big, we forget his power, we forget his size, we forget that he is God almighty and instead we make him a smaller speck than he is and we don't trust him and also, we forget about God's grace, we forget the fact that God said the word came to Jonah a second time.

Okay, now Jonah, God could have looked at Jonah and said, alright, you want to run away and do your thing, that's fine, I'll find someone else who does want to go, who does want to do the thing. God wasn't like that, God pursued Jonah.

It says, the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. You know when things changed for Jonah? Jonah, was when he prayed.

In humility, he just cried out to God and he prayed. He didn't go to a monastery and spend seven years up there just meditating and stuff before he was right before God, he just prayed and he connected with his God again.

[36 : 34] in humility, he cried out to God. Because in Jonah, we see Jesus.

Jonah said, you need to kill me, you need to throw me overboard, that the righteous anger of God will be turned away, that the sea will become calm and that you will be saved.

saved. In Jesus, we see the Son of God saying to the Father, I will be the pure, innocent sacrifice. I will sacrifice in order to turn away the righteous anger of God that many will be saved.

Whoever believes will be saved. In Jonah, we see a man who was dead for three days and three nights in a whale and after three days and three nights was reunited body and spirit, his old body and his spirit.

In Jesus, we see the Son of God after three days and three nights being raised from the dead but this time with a new body.

[37 : 45] That is our hope. That is our hope. Jesus has been raised. In Jonah, we see a whole city rejoicing because of Jonah's obedience.

We see a whole city that was saved from calamity. In Jesus, we see nations, we see the multitudes rejoicing in the fact that he was obedient to his Father.

Do you believe Jonah is fact or fiction? Do you believe God resurrected Jonah from the dead?

Do you believe God raised his only Son to eternal life? Do you believe one day you will be raised from the dead and I will be raised from the dead?

Do you believe one day you will stand before God? Do you believe he is almighty God, a God who saves?

[38 : 53] Do you believe he is good? Watermark, if there's anything you leave with today, I want you to see that God is good.

God can be trusted. And as much as you're running away from God, God is running after you. He's pursuing you. He's calling to you. My plea with you is that he's good and he's gracious.

Instead of running away from him, let's run to him. Let's run with him. Can I pray for you guys? Can we stand?

Father God, we come before you this morning as your people. We come to praise you as the Holy One, as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the God of all creation.

We praise you and we thank you for your mercy, Lord God. We thank you that you are a God who is rich in mercy, who's slow to anger.

[40 : 00] And Lord, we thank you for your justice and we trust in that, Lord God. Father, I pray for us as a church and as a people that as we go out into the world that we might be a people that your mercy flows through us like electricity into this world.

I pray for us that we will see you for who you really are. We will see you as almighty God, big God who can be trusted and loved and served.

Father, thank you that we're this tiny, tiny, tiny speck and yet you make much of us and yet you care for us and yet you love us and you are concerned about us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.