

Jonah

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[0 : 00] In the book of Jonah, so we're going to go right through the book, God willing.! That's four chapters, 48 verses. And it's interesting in these short 48 verses there's 39 references to God.

Think of that. Jonah's journey shows for us God's grace and his power at work. And I put to you there's an application of the book of Jonah in the 21st century in your life and mine, in our lives today.

So firstly we see Jonah was called and so are we. Every believer is called. The book of Jonah emphasises God's grace and provision both to Nineveh and to Jonah.

We don't always stop and appreciate that in our life. And so though Nineveh was a wicked city, God gave its people the opportunity to be spared. And though Jonah was a rebellious servant, God forgave him and he used him. And God tenderly sought to help Jonah overcome his anger.

So we're going to take it up from Jonah from chapter 1 verse 1. And it reads, Something God wants for us today, and I'd like to try to draw some application from the book for everyone that is here.

[1 : 25] And I'll put to you there's some principles in the book of Jonah that are applicable for us today. And firstly we notice here something that God wants for all of us today is to hear him.

To hear him. To go to the word. It says the word of the Lord came unto Jonah. Okay, so we're going to pick it up here. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to that great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

So Jonah received the call of God. What a wonderful privilege. And friends, we've got the word of God in our hands, in our language. What a wonderful privilege that we have the word of the Lord. It's come unto us.

And Nineveh was a wicked place. The people there in Nineveh, they were idol worshippers. They were 600,000 people. God says go. God says go.

A wicked place, 600,000 people. Cruel, heathen, violent, sinful people. And God says go. Go there and cry against it. Here's another thing that God wants for us to do.

[2 : 34] Go and witness. Go ye. That includes you and me. Go ye. Go and witness. Go and tell. He calls Jonah to go.

To go with energy, with spirit. So Jonah was chosen to go. What did Jonah do? Jonah ran. It says, but Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord.

Jonah rose up to flee, verse 3. Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. And went down to Joppa and he found a ship going to Tarshish. Now sometimes the devil provides. The devil provided a ship for Jonah here going the wrong way. And though it goes on, it says, So he paid the fare thereof and went down into it. To go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

So Jonah paid the fare. He bought the ticket to Tarshish. And it was going this way instead of that way. And the cruise was going to cost Jonah dearly this cruise. There would be a high price for it for this Tarshish trip.

[3 : 43] There's a huge cost to rebel against the will of God for our lives. Amen. It's a huge cost. Jonah was a rebel. Jonah ran away. He was running away from God, from the will of God.

He went west instead of east. So we see on the map here, Nineveh was 550 miles east. Tarshish was some 2,500 miles west.

So maybe Jonah thought that if he went there, that God would not be able to find him. That's a bit of a joke, isn't it? You cannot escape God. You cannot escape him.

You cannot escape the presence of God. That is impossible. What direction were his steps as he began running from God down? He went down to Joppa.

Went down into it, into the ship. He went down to Joppa. He went down into the boat. Later he went down, down, down into the belly of the fish. Jonah's life was spiraling down, down, down.

[4 : 40] But he was called to go. But Jonah ran. But this time it's but God. Verse 4.

But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea. And there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Friends, you cannot outrun God.

If God is sending you to Nineveh and you're on a ship to Tarshish, the sea will be against you. The wind will be against you.

Jonah was chosen to go. It's very hard to struggle against God. The very storms of life can be God at work to fulfill his will. God was doing the work.

God's going to get his way with you. Verse 5. It reads on. Then the mariners were afraid, cried every man unto his God and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea to lighten it of them.

[5 : 42] They cried every man unto his God. They were praying desperately to the wrong gods. Where was Jonah in all of this?

Where was he? Was he worshipping? No, he was sleeping. He was snoring. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship, it says, and he lay and he was fast asleep.

Not only was Jonah asleep physically, but he was asleep spiritually too. Here was me preparing the sermon. He had a false sense of security.

Jonah, he was asleep. Asleep spiritually. Asleep physically. Verse 6. It reads on. So the shipmaster came to him and said unto him, what meanest thou, O sleeper?

Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not. Imagine the man shaking Jonah. Come on, what are you doing?

[6 : 41] Jonah was not praying. The sailors were, but not Jonah. And so the heathen ship captain rebuked him. Here's another thing that we can learn.

I put to you that we can apply from the book of Jonah. We go to the word. We should go and witness. We should go to worship. We should go to prayer. We should go to prayer.

When we're out of God's will, we can expect trouble. Trouble will come when you're out of God's will. Friends, God's going to get your attention one way or the other. Verse 7. And they said every man to his fellow, come and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah. So here the sailors recognised Jonah is the one responsible for all this. Verse 8. Then said they unto him, tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us.

What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou? Verse 9. And he said unto them, I am in Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which made the sea and the dry land.

[7 : 54] What a joke, he says. I fear God. I fear the Lord, he says. Didn't seem to be showing it just now, did he? Verse 10. And then were the men exceedingly afraid.

And said unto him, why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord because he had told them. Verse 11. Then they said unto him, what shall we do unto thee that the sea may be calm unto us?

For the sea wrought and was tempestuous. So you can imagine this sea lashing the ship and it was real trouble. This was serious.

Verse 12. And he said unto them, take me up and cast me forth into the sea. So shall the sea be calm unto you. For I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

He said it's because of me. I'm the problem. You wonder why he didn't say take me back so I can obey God and go to Nineveh. Now why didn't they just turn the ship around and go to Nineveh?

[8 : 56] Sounds like Jonah would still rather die than go to Nineveh. Rather die and disobey God still than do God's will. Verse 13. Nevertheless the men rode hard to bring it to the land.

But they could not for the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them. It's no matter what the sailors did. You know they were rowing like mad. It was hopeless still. There was no way that they could save the ship.

Verse 14. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life. And lay not upon us innocent blood.

For thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. Interesting that the sailors prayed to the Lord. The true God. There's still no mention of Jonah praying.

Verse 15. So they took up Jonah, cast him forth into the sea. And it says, And the sea ceased from her raging. Now I'm sure Jonah hadn't planned on disembarking quite like this.

[10:01] So here he is thrown into the deep. The sailors humbled themselves and they prayed. And they were saved. God had mercy on them. Verse 16. And it says further that then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord and made vows.

Verse 17. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. So we see here the Lord has prepared a fish.

He's brought about the preservation of Jonah. So here's Jonah. He had a crash course here. His school was now the belly of a great fish. Notice here it's now that Jonah prayed.

Finally. From verse 1 of chapter 2. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God. Out of the fish's belly. So Jonah was now in a strange place.

An unusual place. At last. Finally he prayed unto the Lord. Finally he got to that point of prayer. And it's been truly said that there's no place beyond the reach of God's grace.

[11:09] God can hear the backslider. You might feel I'm far, far away from God. God's not in my life. I can't reach him. But he can reach you. He can reach you even in the fish's belly like Jonah.

Jonah chapter 2 verse 2 it says. Jonah said. I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord. And he heard me. Out of the belly of hell cried I.

And thou heardest my voice. For thou hast cast me into the deep. In the midst of the seas. And the floods compass me about. All thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Then I said. I am cast out of thy sight. Yet I will look again. Toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about.

Even to the soul. The depth closed me round about. The weeds were wrapped about my head.

What a sight you would have been. Can imagine. Verse 6. And I went down to the bottoms of the mountains.

[12:09] The earth with her bars was about me forever. Yet hast thou brought up. My life from corruption. O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me.

I remembered the Lord. And my prayer came. In unto thee. Into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities. Forsake their own mercy.

So here he was. He says. My soul fainted. I remembered the Lord. My prayer came. In unto thee. Into thy holy temple. Then he says here. They that observe. Or they that trust or worship lying vanities.

Which speaks of idols. You know. These ones who are worshipping worthless idols. They turn from the true source of mercy. And of loving kindness. But he says.

Verse 9. But I will sacrifice unto thee. With the voice of thanksgiving. He says. I will pay that. That I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.

[13:04] Here's a critical verse really in the book. Salvation is of the Lord. And then it says. The Lord spake unto the fish. And it vomited out Jonah.

Upon the dry land. Now in the book we see really. As the Lord referred back to the book of Jonah. The resurrection. We see the death. And the resurrection of Christ.

God is in control. He's in control of the weather. In control of his creation. We see eight times in the book. God intervened.

In terms of control. Of nature. Of creation. Of the weather. Of plants and such. Of creatures. And so Jonah is now expelled from the whale.

From the ship. From the fish rather. The big fish. Whale or such. That he was now on the shore. And so Jonah. Still had this message.

[14:04] That God had given him to deliver. He was. He was. To deliver the message. As the messenger. He himself was the message. As well. We could see. God saved this failure.

Of a prophet. Now he's here on the seashore. And we see. Jonah called. Take two. Jonah. Three. Verse one.

The word of the Lord. It says. And the word of the Lord. Came unto Jonah. The second time. Saying. Notice here. Jonah's told. Go.

He's told to go. It's a second chance. Jonah got a second chance. You could reflect. How likewise. Moses. Got a second chance.

He was a murderer. Mark. Who abandoned Paul. And Barnabas. On a mission trip. God restored Mark. And used him. In a great way. Some would have written him off.

[15:00] But God. Gave him a second. Go. Also. David. He failed miserably. In great sin. And shame. Yet God still used David.

And his life. For his glory. Peter. Also. He denied the Lord. Three times. He denied. And denied. And denied. But the Lord. Forgave him. And he got a second. Chance. If you like. As a mighty preacher. Of the word of God. Verse 2. It reads that. Our Lord says. Arise. Go. Unto Nineveh. That great city. And preach. The preaching. That I bid thee. This time. Jonah went. He got his sandals on. And he started going. The right direction here. And we read verse 3. So Jonah arose. And went unto Nineveh. According to the word. Of the Lord. Now Nineveh. It was an exceeding great city. Of three days journey. Nineveh. [15:58] Was huge. Took some. Three days. To get to. To the centre of it. To get. Into it. And so. It was massive. Six hundred thousand people.

They reckon. A great city. And it was. Great. In terms of its evil. It was greatly evil. It was. An ungodly. City. A sinful city. Given over to idols. Jonah is the only prophet. Sent to a foreign. People. Interesting. Fact. Despite his fears. And his prejudice. Against Nineveh. Jonah. Went. How might he have looked here. You can. Perhaps picture that. He might have looked. Pretty peculiar. I don't know whether he still had a bit of seaweed. Hanging off him. But. Some reckon. Maybe he had the. He was bleached. By the gastric juices. Of the. Of the stomach. Of the whale. And his head. Maybe. Maybe his hair was dissolved. [16:53] Off his body. Because of the. The acid. From the stomach. Of the creature. He was in. And so. You can imagine. What he would look like. As he entered this city.

To preach judgment. So he was a changed man. Physically. But more important. Spiritually. He was changed. In verse four. We see. Jonah began to enter into the city. A day's journey. And he cried. And said. Forty days. Yet. Forty days. And Nineveh. Shall be overthrown. Someone has described. God's plan. For reaching Nineveh. Like this. So. What's your plan. For reaching Nineveh. We're sending Jonah. And who else? No one. What's he going to do? Walk around. And preach. An eight word sermon. What's the eight word sermon? Forty more days. And Nineveh. Will be overthrown. What's your plan B? There is no plan B. This is it. [17:48] Now God's. God's had the same man. That he wanted to give the message. And that was the plan. God's plan is still the same. Let's take two now. God's plan is still the same. The same man.

The same message. The word of God. And we see. The word of God. Will accomplish what. God sends it to do. Isaiah 55. 11. It says. Our Lord says. So shall my word be. That goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void. But it shall accomplish that. Which I please. And it shall prosper in the thing. Whereto I sent it. So in the Hebrew text. His message was five words long. It's a pretty short sermon isn't it? It's been said that a short message is a memorable one. So hopefully I don't go too long this morning. Five words. In the Hebrew. You know. Just these short words. Yet. Yet. Forty days. I guess the next morning he got up and he said. [18:46] Yet. Thirty nine days. Can imagine the countdown. Yet. Thirty eight days. Would have started to get people's attention. Wouldn't it? Really.

You know. Here was Jonah with a short message. But a memorable one. Jonah didn't want to be taking a message of grace. He was. He didn't want God to forgive them. Really. But God's plan for them was salvation. Notice. God loves his enemies. God loves his enemies here. We could think of us. While we were his enemies. Can't we? While we were yet sinners. Christ died for us. Verse five. It reads on. So the people of Nineveh believed God. Wow. Look at that. And proclaimed a fast. And put on sackcloth. From the greatest of them. Even to the least of them. A whole pagan city. Believe God. Wouldn't that be good? You know. We should maybe start going around the streets of Elizabeth. Yet. Forty days. [19:43] Maybe there's something. God will do something. Amen. And this pagan city that we live. A pagan city of Adelaide. Wouldn't that be good? Jonah's message was. Nineveh shall be overthrown.

The word overthrown. It can mean turned over. You know. Turning over. An upheaval. As in destruction. But. Some reckon it can also mean transformed.

In the King James. There's another reference where it means turned. There's a sense where it means a turning. And so. As much as Jonah's message. He wanted destruction. The overthrow of destruction.

God. Brought. A transformation. An overturning of transformation. A turning over. Of. Of a heart. And soul. To God. And repenting. Yeah. The greatest revival in history.

Happened because of this one sentence sermon. Preached by a prophet. Who didn't even want to be there. Who was hoping for their destruction. Who hated the people that he was preaching to.

[20 : 40] He wasn't there to make friends and influence people. Yeah. He was looking for that destruction. What are the chances of that happening? Without God. Zero.

Isn't it? So verse 6 we read. For the word came unto the king of Nineveh. And he arose from his throne. And laid his robe aside. And covered him with sackcloth. And sat in ashes.

Can you imagine it? This great king. With all his wrinkle splendor. And you know. All the riches and glamour. Of being the king. Of this great nation.

This powerful king. And then it says he came. And he humbled himself. He humbled himself. This most powerful king. Humbled himself. And verse 7.

And he caused it to be proclaimed. And published through Nineveh. By the decree of the king. And his nobles. So they sent some herald out. And declared. Hear ye. Hear ye.

[21 : 34] The word of the king. And you can imagine. Let neither man nor beast. Herd nor flock. Taste anything. Let them not feed. Nor drink water.

But let man and beast. Be covered with sackcloth. And cry mightily unto God. Yea. Let them turn everyone. From his evil way. And from the violence.

That is in their hands. Nineveh was a violent city. Let them turn. Everyone.

From his evil way. So the whole nation turned. Imagine them in the streets. Covered in sackcloth. What a sight it was.

Throwing ashes on themselves. In repentance. In remorse. In contrition. In adoration of the God.

[22 : 30] Of heaven. The true God. What a sight. It would have been. Verse nine. Who can tell if God will turn and repent. And turn away from his fierce anger.

That we perish not. So we see God repents. In the sense he changes his mind. Who can tell if God will turn. And repent. He'll change his mind about. This sentence of destruction.

And show mercy rather. And forgiveness. Is the sense of it. Verse 10. And God saw their works.

That they turned. From their evil way. And God repented of the evil. That he had said.

That he would do unto them. And he did it not. So the people of Nineveh now. The people of Nineveh. Got the same second chance. Jonah had. And they took it. These pagans.

They turned. In humility. In repentance. They turned to God. And the Lord showed grace. And goodness. And gave pardon. Friends. No one is too far from the grace.

[23 : 27] Of God. To be saved. From their sin. God's grace can affect. That wonderful transforming. Power. How wonderful is his forgiveness.

And compassion. God's plan. Will be worked out. But then we see Jonah. Being Jonah. Jonah. Acted like Jonah again. He acted fleshly again.

You know. What a picture really. For us. It shows warts and all. The Bible doesn't it. Shows these ones. It doesn't show them. Always that. In a good light. And Jonah. Is one. Who acted in the flesh again.

We read chapter 4 now. Verse 1. But it displeased Jonah. Exceedingly. And he was very angry. You can imagine this. Prophet. Angry. Jonah didn't want the.

Pardon of God. He wanted the damnation of God. On these pagans. These enemies of Israel. Jonah had not wanted their repentance. He wanted their destruction. And in this chapter.

[24 : 27] It's as if he's got a temper tantrum. In the face of God. He shows his rebellious ways again. And he prayed. This time a fleshly prayer. Verse 2.

Jonah knew this.

God you're so caring. And forgiving. And redeeming. I knew this would happen. Jonah hadn't wanted God to show mercy to these pagan Ninevites.

He hadn't wanted God to show grace to them. And he was angry. Therefore now O Lord. Take I beseech thee. My life from me. For it is better for me to die than to live.

Then said the Lord. Do us thou well to be angry. So Jonah went out of the city. And sat on the east side of the city. Then made him a booth. This kind of structure of brush.

[25 : 37] Of sticks. And he sat under it in the shadow. Till he might see what would become of the city. So here's Jonah having his pity party outside the city.

Off to sulk. Sitting there. Steaming. Angry. In a huff. Verse 6. And the Lord prepared a gurd. So this viney leafy plant. It's called a gurd. This kind of big leafy plant came up. Over the stick structure. This booth. And it said it.

The Lord made it come up over Jonah. That it might be a shadow over his head. To deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gurd.

This was gurd. Get a shade on this hot sunny day. Imagine this big leafy plant over Jonah's head. Verse 7. But God prepared a worm. When the morning rose the next day.

[26 : 37] And it smote the gurd. And that it withered. So this leafy plant. God now sends a worm. To eat the plant. At the root. I suppose. And the plant withered.

It dried up. Verse 8. And it came to pass. When the sun did arise. That God prepared a vehement east wind. And the sun beat. Upon the head of Jonah.

That sun's hot. And the sun. The wind. This hot wind. It beats upon the head of Jonah. That he fainted. And wished himself to die.

And said. It is better for me to die than to live. Notice. God appointed a fish. A plant. A worm. A scorching east wind. It's all at his command.

And you can't escape him. If you're trying to be running from God. If you're disobedient to God. You're trying to get out of God's will. He's going to send some things. Your way.

[27 : 35] And Jonah asserts his right to shade in the desert. He asserts his right to grace. God shows to Jonah. The vine was a gift. Just as his mercy was to the Ninevites.

Was a gift. Freely given. Didn't deserve it. He didn't even appreciate it really. Did he? To give God the glory for it.

So neither the sheltering vine. A means of grace in the desert. Nor the forgiveness of God can be earned. Only received. Likewise salvation. God's gift. It's a salvation.

It's a gift. His gift to you. Verse 9. And God said to Jonah. Doest thou well to be angry for the good? Now what are you getting angry for? And he said.

I do well to be angry. Even unto death. Verse 10. Then said the Lord. Thou hast had pity on the good. For the which thou hast not laboured. Neither made it grow. Which came up in a night.

[28 : 32] And perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh? Jonah. That great city. Wherein there are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand.

And also much cattle. Jonah had pitied the plant when it died. But he had not pitied the people of Nineveh. God chose to give them pardon.

To bring revival. To this pagan godless city. But Jonah had zero compassion. Really.

On the thousands of people at Nineveh. God himself had shown mercy and pardon. Jonah had not wanted Nineveh to know God's mercy and pardon.

And God had compassion on that great city. And God humbled Jonah. So what can we learn from Jonah again?

[29 : 36] We see that picture of the death of Christ. Buried in the tomb for three days. Risen. Alive.

There's different schools of thought whether actually Jonah died in the. Was actually dead in the fish. And then he was resurrected.

When he was cast on the beach. But. Either way it's a miracle. Either way. It's a miracle. That God sustained him in the fish. As he prayed.

And then he talks about praying in. In hell. As it were. In the grave. So there's a sense where. Either way it's a miracle. That God sustained him.

Or God. Resurrected him. But there's warning here. In Jonah. The book of Jonah. There's warning here. There's chastening here. There's God's will here.

[30 : 33] For us in the book. And really. The message is. Salvation is of the Lord. It's all. Praise to him. Friends. And it's true. For you and me. For us today.

And the. The learnings from Jonah's book. Hear the voice of the Lord. Go to the book. Friends. Go to the word.

The will of God is still the same. Go to the word. The word of the Lord. He wants you to do this. To go to the word. And to trust him. Obey the word.

Also. He wants us to go. As he told Jonah. Go. Go ye. It's his command. It's his commission.

For all of us. You can go and witness. In many different ways. Go and witness. Join the team. Saturday. Go and witness. Get some leaflets. Pass them out. Go and witness.
[31 : 28] In your workplace. In your social place. As you talk to. Friends. Family. Witness there. Go and witness. Go to your Nineveh. And trust God.

Don't disobey God. And scarp it. Run and hide. Run. In God's direction. Go and witness. Also. Go and worship. Pray. No matter your situation. It might be. You're in a fish's belly. Whatever it be. You're in a storm. You're in a crisis.

You're in a chaos. Chaos. You need God. Pray. Go to worship. Pray. Humble yourself. Pray. Depend on God. Talk to him. And believe God. God shows mercy. You might think. Even. Your worst enemy. If you have an enemy.

[32 : 23] Think of your worst enemy. And go and. Could it be. They're the ones that. You need to go to. That would be hard. Wouldn't it. To love them.

To even want them to be saved. Do they want. Do they deserve it. Think of that. You could. You could reckon on. Wow. The Ninevites. No way.

My enemies. You don't know my enemies. Maybe they're the ones that we need to take. Have the courage. And gumption. Because God gives people second chances.

And he works in lives. He brings revival. He's the source of salvation. Salvation is of the Lord. So trust in his providence. In his grace. To save you.

To work in your life. And those you know. As well. So go to the word. Hear his voice. Go and witness. Tell a soul. Tell souls.

[33 : 19] Reach out. And go to worship. Pray. Pray like Jonah. Pray. Early. Early. Not late. Like Jonah prayed. Don't pray fleshly.

Like Jonah too. But pray. Prayerfully. And know God. Is the source of. Every good gift. Of revival. Of salvation. Trust his providence.

To save you. So the key message here really. Is salvation is of the Lord. It's Jonah 2 verse 9. In part. Salvation is of the Lord.

Even for a rebellious city. For a rebellious prophet. For a lost city. Salvation is of the Lord. Praise him. Lord we thank you. That we can. Trust you. Lord.

It took a while. For Jonah to. To hear you. For you to get his attention. And even then. We see. He failed. So much. Lord. Help us to learn.

[34 : 12] From his. Example. The good example. When he. When he did do. Your will. But. Also from the bad example. He was at times. Help us Lord. To. Be led by your spirit.

And. To take your word. To. To be. Mindful of your great salvation. And. To thank you Lord.

Salvation is from you. And it's that great gift. That. We cannot ever deserve.

Yet. We can be recipients of it. Lord gladly. And we pray. Each one here might know that. That great gift of God. In Jesus name. Amen.