

Storms and Surrender | The Sailors Conversion | Jonah 1:11-16

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[0 : 00] Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity to come before you, where we are at in life. Today we're going to open the word of God and we are going to continue our study, our series on Jonah. Let us be open to you speaking to us. Let us learn how important it is that we rely on you for our salvation. May we trust in you with our very lives. Our lives are but a drop in the ocean of eternity, but we are humbled by this. May we be in awe and wonder of who you are. Lord, we cannot do it without you. A life without you is no life at all. A life without you is empty. It's meaningless and futile and we wish to have a life with you. You knew us before we were born. You made us in your image and you loved us first. You gave us your son so that we can have life everlasting through faith in Jesus Christ. May we be open to hear, to understand, and to apply your word here today. Lead us and guide us as you always have to have that relationship with you, to grow in you, and to go and make a difference in your name. We say this in Jesus' holy name, amen. Well good morning

Ontario. It's great to be with all of you this morning. My name is Patrick Daly and I have the privilege to serve as the pastor here at Ontario Community Church.

Before we're going into our passage of Jonah chapter 1 verses 11 through 16, before we do that, you know there's something that's always been on my mind as a Christian and even before being a Christian. It's how God works in wonderful and mysterious ways. Some of us have a testimony that we share. Some of us have a story or we may know someone who God has worked in some incredible capacity or incredible way. Other stories, while these stories stick out, they testify for the power of who God is. What is your story? What is the story of how you came to know the Lord? Each and every one of us have a story, no matter how significant or insignificant we may think it is. It is important. It is your story.

And ask yourself, have you recently shared in your testimony on how you came to know the Lord? Today I'd like to open with a question here and it's the question of do you know about God or do you know God? You see there's a difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. Every single one of us, we have a story that we can share. We can reach and speak to different people, to different personalities and different situations. Every person that we sit next to has a story and how you share that story with someone may, it may speak to someone. I can't speak to everyone, but certainly your story can speak to someone. That's the beauty of our testimony. And this takes us into the story of where we are in Jonah and today we are going to learn about the sailors conversion story and I'm titling this sermon, Storms and Surrender. It's a conversion story. So this, we have been going over Jonah, right? We've gone over how God called Jonah and Jonah fled. He was fleeing to Tarshish away from the presence of the Lord. During this series we've gone over how God called Jonah, right? Jonah fled. God hurls the storm in the efforts of Jonah running away. The sailors pray to their God and the captain rebukes him. And last week we learned about how the sailors learned about who Jonah is and the God that he worships. The sailors began to have respect and reverence the fear of the Lord. And that leads us today where we are at Jonah chapter 1 verse 11 through 16. If you turn to page 920 in your Bibles or if you're not using the ESV Pew Bible it's Jonah chapter 1 verse 11 through 16.

So page 920, go ahead and turn there with me. Then they said to him, what shall we do to you? That the sea may quiet down for us. For the sea grew and grew. He said to them, pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will quiet down for you.

[5 : 32] For I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you. Nevertheless the men they rode hard to get back to dry land. What? What just happened? He just told them but they keep rowing. What just happened there, right?

To get back to dry land. But they could not for the sea grew more and more. They grew harder right against them. Therefore they called out to the Lord, oh Lord let us not perish for this man's life and lay not on us innocent blood.

For you, oh Lord, have done as it pleased you. So they picked up Jonah and they hurled him into the sea and the sea ceased from the raging. Then the men feared the Lord a little bit. No, they feared the Lord exceedingly and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. These are the verses. We start off these verses knowing that the sailors began to fear God. They began to have this sense of reverence, this sense of awe and wonder for who God is. They recognized that they need God.

And boy oh boy don't we all need God. This is the part where the sailors they are wondering what can we do to be saved. Okay Jonah you have revealed who you are and the God that you worship. So what can I do about this? Let us not forget that once this question is asked we find that the storm is increasingly it is getting worse and worse. The time is now to make a decision. The time is now to act. There is some pretty descriptive language to use and it's there's not much more time.

It's interesting that Jonah says that I know why the storm is happening. He knows exactly what's going on and the sailors they want to know how do I get out of here? What must I do to get out of the storm? What an interesting response that you need to throw me into the sea so that the storm will stop? Well if we go to verse 13 we find that it says what does it say? It says that the men threw Jonah into the sea and then the storm calmed down right? Is that what it says? No what does it say? It says that okay Jonah is saying you need to throw me into the sea and the storm is gonna stop and they keep rowing. Well wait a minute you just wanted you were asking the question what must I do for the storm to stop but they keep rowing. It says the word in scripture nevertheless and that word is used. It can be Jonah told them but they kept rowing on. Jonah told them what needs to happen and they decided to keep going their own way or you can think of it as so then they decided to go their other way and when you read through this in your Bible you cannot help but think of the question okay the storm is getting worse and Jonah is telling us what we need to do so why are they rowing harder when they were just told what they need to do? It's very interesting. I think sometimes the word of God is funny. It just shows us instead of listening to Jonah and throwing him into the sea they decide to take it upon themselves and try to get to dry land on their own. My goodness doesn't this sound familiar? Doesn't this sound like our own lives when we try to row harder?

[9 : 07] Let me tell you something. If a storm is getting worse or if there let's say there's a tornado that's going on and you see it on the news you guys have seen those tornado chasers before. Now those people have got some thick skin right those people are pretty borderline courageous and crazy I don't know but it's somewhere walking the fine line. If you see a tornado do you go towards it?

I sure hope not. I sure hope you don't go towards it. If there's an earthquake are you gonna go into a tall skyscraper? Absolutely not. If there's a storm that's approaching you normally want to get away from the storm or seek shelter or something but these sailors are not doing that. In fact the verse says that they are digging in and I think that's a very interesting word. I want to bring up that next slide here that says to dig in and this is going to be in your notes. It means to dig in or to row. What's interesting about that choice of words right when they're rowing harder it's the word dig in which is actually used eight times in the Old Testament and every time that verse that wording is used there is physical labor or in this case in your notes physical efforts and spiritual truth here. For example we're not going to open our Bibles I put it in your notes here for you to reference is that in Job chapter 24 it's about feeling guilty in the morning after doing wrong at night right so they're physically breaking into someone's house but they feel guilt and shame after it right the physical labor and the spiritual reaping if you will. In Jonah right we see that the sailors are fighting against the storm physically right they're fighting against that storm but they're learning it's their struggle against God that's what we as Bible believers as Christians or even as anyone who picks up a Bible can learn. In Amos chapter 9 verse 2 it teaches us that we cannot physically run away from the Lord we can't hide that it emphasizes that we cannot escape God's presence and God's judgment and Ezekiel the word is shown up the same word to dig in or to row hard right against the sea. Ezekiel is talking about uncovering the hidden sins of Israel it's shown symbolically it's showing physically digging to uncover evil so there's kind of like this connection here with the physical labor and the spiritual truth that's uncovered it reveals the spiritual truth such as the exposure of sin the struggle against God's power the inability to escape God's presence and the consequences that lead into exile is found in those later Ezekiel passages.

So the sailors pray to not their gods but they pray to the Lord they're putting their hands together if it as it were they're calling out to the Lord and they're praying to him and this is the part where the sailors are proclaiming they're calling out remember for those of us who have been here before we've I've mentioned the idea of calling out to God versus crying to their gods right the sailors previously were crying to their gods for help they're saying help me I'm struggling now they are proclaiming they're calling upon the Lord in the same way that God wants Jonah to proclaim to the city of Nineveh I find it very interesting that the same word is used in this case they are calling upon the one true God the God that we believe in the sailors pray their prayer and I mentioned a couple weeks ago where there's a connection between the Gospel of Mark and the story of Jonah I mentioned the sea stories the disciples say save us Lord we are perishing it's almost the exact wording oh Lord let us not perish and save us Lord we are perishing it's the same language that's being used between the Old Testament and the New Testament I find that very interesting in both instances the sailors and the disciples they're calling out to the Lord that they do not perish and it's just I love how in the word of God there's that interconnection this and this leads us to another point so I'd like to make clear that when we call out to Jesus Jesus saves us in Jonah chapter 1 verse 14 right they called out to the Lord right we are just going over that verse in Psalm 69 save me oh God this is in your notes the waters have come up to my neck I sink in the deep mire where there is no foothold I have come into deep waters and the waters sweep over me in all of these passages we see that it is the calling out to God and that our Lord God saves us when we call upon him we are calling upon him how often do we call upon the name of Jesus Christ to save us when we are in trouble I hope that we all do in those times of crisis or in those critical times the language may be different but the exact wording is not there but the sailors are calling out to God so they end up what do they keep Jonah there on the boat longer or do they eventually throw him out they throw him out into the sea right and then what happens the storm continues right no eventually it says here that these storm calms they give their life to God this is the part where the sailors they make sacrifices the sailors do not wish to perish so they call upon the Lord it is at this moment where they are saying Lord have it done as it pleased you it is there they're basically saying Lord have it your way this is the sailors surrendering to the

Lord I don't think they had much of a choice if you ask me but sometimes we need to be in a storm like that to realize that our God is here with us this is part of submission it is the part of letting go and allowing for God to be in your life it is recognizing that God is in control and he will have his way there are many verses in your notes here Psalm 115 verse 3 our God is in the heavens he does all that he pleases Psalm 135 verse 6 it says whatever the Lord pleases he does these are verses that are referring to that God is going to have his way he's gonna do what he has to do they picked up Jonah and they threw him into the sea this is where the sailors they feared the Lord the storm had calmed and the sailors were saved both from the literal storm and from the spiritual storm of not knowing the Lord and this we can't help but think about us for a moment here this is a story that we can take away we can learn from and we can also realize how similar is our life to these sailors do we identify with them this story is a conversion story and I believe that many of us can relate to the sailors do you know the Lord or do you just know about the Lord there's a difference between head knowledge right I may know who I may know about Tom Cruise but do I actually know Tom Cruise I may know about Beyonce and you know I let's say read about her in the tabloids or whatever but do I actually know her you see there's a difference between knowing of or knowing about somebody compared to actually knowing somebody and having that intimate deeper relationship many people in churches throughout the world they know about God from reading scripture right we can have that deeper relationship with Christ by opening our Bibles and turning through the pages of

God's Word we can see how the Old Testament is pointing to Christ we can learn about how Jesus's ministry his death his burial his resurrection his miracles that he performed I don't know about you I'd love to see Christ when he walked on water I would love to see the feeding of the five thousand I would love to see someone whose death be healed to hear again that would be incredible and we hear stories about this we hear about the stories in the Word of God some of us know about God from hearing testimonies of other people but again knowing about someone is different than actually knowing someone do you actually know the Lord do you have that relationship with him do you know him personally it's the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge knowing God personally is making the decision to have Christ at the center of your life it is recognizing the power and the might of who God is it is realizing it is that sense of awe and wonder I love how the Old Testament uses the fear of the Lord to be in awe and wonder if you look at the stars in the sky on a clear night and you see all the countless stars and you're like just making one star would be difficult enough I mean yeah we have technology but we can't make a star let alone millions of them or think of the microscopic organisms from the deepest parts of the sea they're quite ugly creatures if you ask me but still part of God's creation can we build a mountain like Mount

[19 : 46] Everest no we can't but the thing is it is being in awe and wonder of who God is knowing the Lord Jesus is choosing to have Christ in your heart by believing in him it is through faith many of us in this life crave for something more than the superficial the shallowness there's a lot of shallowness in our culture a lot of us crave depth to be a part of something bigger and I got to tell you to know God to be a part of the family of God to be a child of the Lord to be a part of the body of Christ that is where we find purpose that is where we find life that is where we find truth when we seek God we are seeking to know and to be known by God this is a part of how we love God by seeking him in your notes here I've played that to know God is to be known by God there's many versions

Galatians 4 9 now that you have come to know God or rather to be known by God how can you turn back on to the weak and the worthless elementary principles of this world in other words the shallowness or the superficial things of this earth right it's like how some people make their entire life and they build it upon their occupation or they I don't know they just find some little thing that's they seek the created but not the Creator we worship the Creator the living God first Corinthians chapter 8 verse 3 if anyone loves God he is known by God John chapter 10 verse 14 I am the good shepherd I know my own and my own know me that is why we should know the Lord and not know about the Lord or I know Jesus he's a cool guy he's a great teacher how many of us know someone who says things like that right Jesus a good teacher well yes that's true

Jesus Christ is a great teacher or some of us say oh yeah Jesus was a pretty cool pretty cool hippie had long hair you know just walking with his sandals there's so much more to Jesus Christ than a man with long hair wearing sandals we're talking about the Savior of humanity we're talking about someone who gave salvation through his death his burial his resurrection the fact that he fulfilled so many prophecies that we find and discover in the Old Testament Christ is a great teacher but he's so much more than that that's actually how we can reach out to other people in conversations in relationships when someone says Jesus is a great teacher that's an invitation to speak to that that Christ is more than just the great teacher he's the Savior of humanity so what can we conclude here what can we take away what in the world does all of this mean to us well there's so much parallel there's so much connection that we can find in the Word of God salvation in the storms of life I'd like to show you there's gonna be a few slides here I want to show you number one the storm is life without God the storm in Jonah's story it symbolizes the storm that we face in a life without God you see Jonah was running away and God hurled the storm and in the same way when we live a life without God there is a storm that is there that needs to be calmed Jesus Christ gives us peace he gives us new life and that storm that spiritual storm in this case is gone a life without God is a life lost almost like a life lost at sea with this storm we are all lost without Christ but it's like that famous song I once was lost but now and found was blind but now can see the second one is Jonas message is the gospel message

Jonah speaking to the sailor represents the gospel message shared with those who do not believe yet there's many verses we don't have time to go through all of the verses but those verses in your notes is for you to read and study yourself when Jonah is saying I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord that is no different than us sharing I am a Christian and I worship Jesus Christ the son of the living God it's just sharing your faith it gives us a framework like I mentioned last week the third one is question and answer which is seeking and finding Christ the sailors are asking Jonah for a solution and Jonah responds it's much like how if a someone who doesn't know Christ who doesn't know the Lord says how do I come to salvation how do I come to know the Lord what must I do to be saved well we must respond by speaking to them and pointing them to

Christ now this next one is the sailors struggle is our struggle now it's a little more difficult because when you read that on the surface I want the world I'm not rowing harder on a boat what do you mean by that the sailors fail the temp to save themselves by rowing harder are much like our own efforts to live this life without the Lord I am reminded this is in your notes about Proverbs chapter 3 verse 5 through 6 right trust in the Lord with all of your head no trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding what's so interesting is that God is the firm foundation in which we build our lives right like the wise man who builds his house upon the stone right when we are leaning on our own understanding it's like we're building a wall a nice fancy wall instead of a firm foundation in in the Lord it's just a very interesting how the language is like that so the sailors are trying so hard to what do it on their own they are fighting the storm right can you really fight can you row upstream my friends can you do it I mean I guess you could kind of do it for a little bit but at the end of the day the current will take you down further down the river that is like when we are trying when we attempt or we think that we can go against the Lord our God our efforts well it's not gonna work and that's unfortunately what the sailors had to learn but maybe it's not so unfortunate because it shows us in scripture later we learn they couldn't do it on their own so do you really think you can let's think about that we can't do it on our own the next slide is crying out to God it represents our need for God like the sailors we need to realize we need to come to God for salvation when the sailors like I said they're rowing harder and harder eventually there comes a point where they get it they're like oh it's not working I can't do this I need God instead because when they turn to God this the calm sea happens much like in our own lives when we turn to God that storm is no longer Jonah overboard is a representation of Christ's sacrifice now this is very interesting the sailors throwing Jonah into the sea it is a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice on the cross to calm the storms in our lives right there was a command by from Jonah to throw out Jonah right if you will but think of it like this think of you need to get rid of your own way so that you can receive salvation you need to throw out your pride you need to throw out this old belief in other words in more simplistic terms you need to turn to Jesus instead of trying to do it on your own it's just a nice little representation here perhaps it can mean turning away from your sin as well throwing the sin overboard if you will now mind you we're all sinners we need to turn to Christ first and foremost but we do need to turn from our sin as well the next one is the calm sea and peace in Christ the calming of the storm symbolizes the peace and security that we find in accepting Christ do you

[29 : 41] realize that by accepting Christ your life will no longer be the same do you realize that God is going to mold you he is going to form you he's going to lead you on a path of righteousness all you need to do is follow his will and his way and continue with following in his footsteps and that final one is prayers and sacrifices which equals living for God they cried out to God and they threw out Jonah all right I'm good I confessed to the Lord and you know I asked for repentance I'm good I don't need to do anything anymore no you make a decision for Christ you accept Jesus into your heart you then live for Christ you are on a path of righteous living exhibiting Christ's likeness to others you go on a walk with the Lord so it doesn't say in the verse like oh they threw out Jonah and wet their hands clean they're on their way it's saying they lived for the Lord because that is part of our story when you make a decision for Christ that's the most important step but you know what's after that step is living for God it is sharing in the word of God with others it is sharing your testimony it is praying for others it is inviting people it's inviting people to church it's inviting them how can I pray for you how can I be present with you you know that's I think that's one thing that gets missed often the most important thing for us to do is to make a decision for Christ that's we can't argue with that but certainly we need to live for the Lord not just take advantage of God by by seeing that the storm has come okay well I'm good I'm gonna roll after the fact no did you not just learn turning your life around for God means living for him and I just want to make that point very clear because you know you have this image here of people ideally they're in the mountains or whatever praying to the Lord but the sailors prayers and sacrifices it represents our commitment to live for God once we are saved I want to say this and I want you guys to remember this we are saved by faith right we are not saved by works we are saved for works we don't want to get that order wrong because so often in other religions if you will it's about doing the good works first and then you'll get saved but when Jesus died on the cross because he saved you wouldn't you want to do things because of that salvation does that make sense there's there's a much there's a difference and unfortunately people get into that habit of saying well you need to do more you need to do more certainly do good in the world by all means but first seek Christ make that decision have that relationship we can come closer to God to know him right we can pray to the Lord we can read scripture we can study it we can experience nature we can give our time and our talent and treasure as well but the most important thing is deciding to have Christ at the center of your life receiving the gift of salvation accepting Jesus Christ into your life

that is the most important decision and by all means because of that salvation go out into the world and do good I think of the famous James passage which always gets a lot of people argue over it it's faith without works is dead certainly we are saved and we should go out and do because of the faith so my friends as we have gone through this critical part of the story of the sailors conversion we can see ourselves in a similar way aren't we going to face many storms in life sometimes it's by our own doing sometimes it just happens will you be open to hearing the good news of the gospel will you cry out to Jesus will you call upon his name asking that you do not perish but have everlasting life and for those of you that know the Lord are you going to share in your faith with your neighbor with your friends with your family with the people that you interact with may you come to know God may you come to experience the peace that surpasses all understanding may you grow closer to God whose way is higher God's way is much simpler than man's God's way is holier and God's way is good it is not enough to simply have head knowledge about God yeah I know God he's a cool guy it's much more than that he's a cool guy oh he's a cool guy he's a very cool guy buddy but it's so much more than that we must know the Lord personally we do this by having this relationship with Jesus

Christ and by submitting to Christ come as you are to the table but let God work in and through you let me repeat myself here we invite people as they are wherever they are out in life and we ask that God transforms them from the inside out let God work on them you never know where you're at in your spiritual walk or your spiritual life or where you're at in life period come to the Lord come to the table and let God work in you God transforms us he gives us purpose in in this life he provides salvation just as we took communion today we remember Jesus Christ for what he did may we never forget Jesus Christ may we remember him first Corinthians chapter 8 verse 3 says if anyone loves

God he is known by God and it's my prayer today my friends that you all come to know God may you be known by God and the closing slide that I have for you it's the same question we opened with do you know about God or do you know God do you only have the head knowledge of God or do you have the heart knowledge let's pray father we unpacked a lot today may we come to understand that yours you are the true God you are the sovereign God overall creation you made each and every one of us in your image and we've gone over the very idea that we cannot do things we cannot do this life without you we can row against the storms we can row against your way we can fight it all day long but at the end of the day we need you may we come to know you may we seek you may we draw near to you may we have that relationship with you and in so doing may we grow in Christ may we be encouraged to study your word and pray for others and be present let us all come to know you you are a good God you are a holy God you are not an evil God in fact your way is far better than and any man can create we thank you and we praise you and as we are doing our closing song today we just ask that we we come closer to you today we love you in Jesus name that we pray