

Jonah 2

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[0 : 00] Let us turn out the Old Testament to the book of Jonah, chapter 1.

Jonah, chapter 1. It is about the eighth last book in the Old Testament.

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, say, Amen. Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tashish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa.

And he found a ship going to Tashish. So he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them unto Tashish from the presence of the Lord.

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. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his guard, and cast forth the words that were in the ship into the sea to lighten it of them.

[1 : 45] But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship, and he lay and was fast asleep. 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. And they said, Every one to his fellow, Come, and let's cast lots that we may know for whose cause this evil is come upon us.

So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 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? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

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.

[2 : 58] Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. 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. Nevertheless, the men rode hard to bring it to the land, but they could not.

For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. 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, Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea. And the sea ceased from a raging.

Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows. May God bless to us.

[4 : 11] That reading from his word, and to his name be thee, pray. Let us turn now to consider the passage we read in God's word in the book of Jonah, chapter 1.

And we read from, we take up our studies this night from verse 4, through to the end of the chapter. Jonah, chapter 1, 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, and so on.

Now, last Sabbath evening, in beginning this study with you in the book of Jonah, we looked at Jonah's flight from God.

Jonah running away from the Lord, and from the Lord's command, the Lord's commission. Jonah pursued by God.

[5 : 27] And notice the means that God used in bringing this man back to a condition or to a state of obedience.

He used a storm. He used the sailors. He used the captain of the ship. And then we will look at Jonah's confession of his God.

He nails his colors to the mast, and he acknowledges his guilt. Then we look at the amazing account of Jonah's commitment of himself to the Lord when he asked the men to throw him overboard.

And we'll see running through all this how God used all these things, not only to bring Jonah to the position in which he ought to be, that of obedience, but he used all these things to bring these heathen sailors to himself.

He used them to convert these sailors. First of all, and more particularly, Jonah pursued by God.

[6 : 45] Now, last week in looking at the first three verses of this book, when we looked at the Jonah's flight from God, we ended by suggesting to you that when someone sets out to baffle God or disobey God, there is bound to be a storm in his life.

Well, this is the first thing that God used to bring this man back to himself. But the Lord sent out a great storm wind into the sea.

There was a mighty tempest in the sea, so the ship was likely to be broken. Now, the first thing to notice here is the way in which the Bible puts this. It wasn't just an ordinary storm.

It wasn't a force 9 or a force 10. It wasn't the usual stormy conditions that sailors from time to time come across at all.

This was something extraordinary. It was supernatural. The word that is used here is the word hurled. The Lord hurled a great wind into the sea.

[8 : 07] This was something that came direct from the hand of God. He intervened in the ordinary course of nature, and he worked miraculously or supernaturally in the experience of both Jonah and these sailors.

So, the first thing we come across here is this supernatural, this extraordinary storm. Now, you know that the book of Jonah is full of the supernatural.

Full of the supernatural. There is the storm. There is the fish. There is Jonah being swallowed by the fish. Jonah alive for three days in the belly of the fish.

Jonah being vomited out onto dry land again. And Jonah going and preaching to Nineveh. Heathen sailors being converted. A whole heathen city being converted.

A revival in Nineveh. It's full of the supernatural. And that is one reason why so many people laugh today at the book of Jonah, because they don't want the supernatural.

[9 : 21] It is strange that so many people are prepared to watch films and read books which speak of the extraordinary supernatural, but when it comes to the Bible, they laugh at that.

They'll fill their minds with anything else and they'll accept everything, but not what the Bible says. And so Jonah is discarded. Well, here you come across another evidence of the supernatural.

This extraordinary storm. The first step in God's pursuit of his servant. He allowed him to run away. He made it easy for him to be disobedient.

He provided the means all along the way so that Jonah felt comparatively safe as he slipped away from God.

But thankfully, God doesn't allow people to slip away from them. God hones them. God doesn't leave them.

[10 : 24] Let me say this to you. In applying this, before passing on to the next bit, the place that the sailors have in bringing Jonah back to obedience. Let me say this to you.

And do all must understand. I would say on the authority of the Word of God that it's an awful thing for any man or woman, boy or girl, to be left alone by God.

It must be an awful thing in the life of an individual when God isn't speaking to them. There isn't a more pathetic individual in the whole of the Bible than Herod when he spoke to Jesus and he questioned Jesus and he probed and he probed and he probed.

But Jesus answered him, not a word. There was silence in the life of Herod. And that's why I say it's an awful thing to be left alone by God.

You know, it's an awful thing for a Christian. If, for example, there's a Christian here tonight who's on the path of disobedience who is doing something wrong, whose life isn't right, and who seems to be getting on in that path.

[11 : 45] My friend, the fact that that is so with you is not evidence that what you are or what you're doing is God's will. It may be evidence of God abandoning you, God leaving you until the storm

breaks in your life.

So you see, here was Jonah running away from God. But what he didn't realize was that God was pursuing him. And now God steps in.

In this first act, he sends out this storm. And therefore I would say to you that if your life is being disturbed tonight by something that you didn't expect, I don't know what it may be, if things are maybe turning against you, things are beginning to bother you, things begin to trouble you, don't fault God for these things.

Be thankful that God is using them to speak to you. Let's see in a minute, unfortunately, we can be asleep even as God speaks so powerfully.

But at least he was speaking to this man. And that was the beginning of his hope for return. Then secondly, God used the sailors.

[13:07] The sailors were afraid and they cried every man to his God and cast forth the words around the ship into the sea to lighten it of them. And the shipmaster came to Jonah who was asleep, of course, in the sides of the ship and he wakened him up.

Call upon thy God and so be that God will think upon us that we perish not. Now this is the second thing, the second element in God's pursuit of Jonah.

The use he made of these sailors. Now there are various things that come to light here. Some precious teachings that we have in the word of God and very frightening ones at that.

The first one is this. And this is true of us all, those of us who are believers. And indeed in a sense if you're not a believer at all it can be true. That without your knowing it you can involve others in your own sin.

You can involve others in your own sin. Look at, take a drunkard. Look at the misery that a father who's addicted to drink brings into his family.

[14:23] He involves others in his own sin. They're not guilty of the sin that he's committing but he involves them in it and he brings misery into their lives.

And because of what he is and what he is doing they often cry in the bitterness of their heart to God for help. It's the same with a Christian of course, even more so.

A Christian, when God is pursuing him, God is bringing that man back to himself. God will involve others in the punishment or the chastisement rather of that individual Christian.

So you see, when you and I go wrong and God is going to correct us, it isn't just you who's going to suffer as a result of the correction.

Those who are around you will suffer as well. Take the classic example of Achan in Israel. He sinned by taking the forbidden loot.

[15:32] It was forbidden to take it but he went, he thought all was sinning. He could do it. He hid it. But what he didn't realize was that God was seeing him and another thing he didn't realize, by doing it, he brought disaster upon the whole of Israel at the battle of Ai because of his own sin.

So it is, one person's sin can be the reason for God's chastisement, God's wrath, God's anger upon a family, a community, a congregation.

a church. Why, we ask, why is God withholding his blessing? Oh, there are various reasons.

But I think that if you and I were looking at that question in the right way and wanted to give the right answer, I don't think that any one of us would dare go beyond himself.

And you and I would have to sit and ask, as the disciples did, at the Lord's table when Jesus said, one of you will betray me, Lord, is it I?

[16:46] So, can it be maybe that for one of us here tonight, we are involving others in God's chastisement, God's punishment, God's wrath because of our own sin, disobedience, indiscretion.

and then notice this in connection with these people. You see, it was because of Jonah that this storm, this supernatural storm, came.

It was because of Jonah that the ship was being tossed. It was because of Jonah that these manners, these seamen, were desperately afraid. I'm sure you hear it even to this day, those of you are seamen here, ships captains in this congregation.

You know yourselves, and I've heard some of you saying it, that with these tremendous, with these great liners and with that, with the tremendous tonnage of steel that you have under your feet, even today, crossing the Pacific and crossing the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, some of you have been afraid in the fissures of storms.

What is it like for these men in these poor, wooden barks that they had in Jonah's day, in the midst of that kind of supernatural storm?

[18:06] Have you ever been afraid crossing the Minch? Maybe. Maybe you have. Well, you can understand something of the fear that these men had as this storm raged.

So, Jonah brought this fear, he brought these situations, these circumstances into their lives by his own sin.

You know that, as I said earlier, you know that people, and I just mentioned this in the passing and I pass on to some of you, you know that this theme of, it's a, I find a most frightening theme.

What one man's sin can bring upon others? It's a frightening thing. And that's why I said earlier that I don't think it's right for, you know, there are times when I'm appalled when we as committees and various committees at congregation level and press level and assembly level look, what's wrong with the church and what's wrong here and what's wrong there?

And I often feel that none of us could go beyond himself or herself. It's a die. And this is what I was going to say.

[19:26] You remember David at one time sinned against God and the sin was that he numbered Israel. And the sin there was that he was basing his position, his own strength as a king on the strength, the numerical strength of the nation.

A sin to which some of us are exposed, may I say. We tend to rely upon, we tend to build congregational strength to build it upon numbers, figures.

It's always a dangerous practice because the Bible reminds of this not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

Anyway, David was chastised by God and a pestilence came and it swept away thousands of people and cattle and sheep.

Remember what David said. Lord, he said, I have done wrong, but these sheep, what have they done? Nothing was the answer.

[20:40] But he, by his sin, had involved them. so I leave it at this. Whoever you may be tonight, and I speak to myself as well, whoever you may be or wherever you are, be sure that the cush of life that you are treading tonight isn't as a result of your sinful disobedience involving others in the chastisement and the punishment of God.

And then, this was the, the other effect of their fear was this, that they began everyone to cry unto his God.

Now, very often, fear does this. Fear makes people religious. all of a sudden. The fear of the consequences.

What's going to happen if this ship breaks up? What's going to happen if we've got to abandon the ship? What's going to happen to us? Our life is in danger, so the best thing to do, of course, is to turn to God.

They were afraid they cried every man unto his God and cast forth the wares that were in the ship. And what this is really, that is, that is, that is, say, in each one of us, in each one of us, that from time to time we turn to some power out with ourselves, what we may call the SOS of prayer.

[22:27] The prayer of terror. Man turning to religion in a crisis. Oh, you see it very often when people are ill. at home or in hospital, and you speak to them, and inevitably the conversation comes around to religion, to the Bible, to prayer, and there are pains to impress upon you how they are praying and what they are praying for.

But unfortunately, the trouble with that kind of prayer is that it seems to rely upon itself. it is devoid of faith, of love, of trust in the Lord himself.

It doesn't lay hold by faith upon Jesus Christ. It is a prayer to an unknown God. It isn't the confidence of the church in Psalm 46 when she was confronted with terror on every side and was able to say confidently, God is our refuge and our strength.

The church winging its way prayerfully into the presence of Almighty God and saying with a calm confidence of the Savior himself, my life is in his hand.

You see, we have to beware of making prayer a religion. beware of making a reformation our religion.

[24:02] There are circumstances in life which evoke an interest in religion in the heart of the individual, young and old, and we have to make sure that an interest in religion is not synonymous with conversion to Christ.

Nothing is conversion to Christ but a commitment of my life and my all to him who is my Lord and my Savior.

And then there is something else. They threw everything overboard. They began to lighten the ship. They cast forth the waves to lighten it of them.

Doing everything to save themselves. And here is another classic example of what happens to men and women in a crisis. All their life they gather together what they can.

they can live without God without Christ without religion until the crisis comes. And then when the crisis comes everything goes. They are prepared to let go and throw everything overboard.

[25 : 10] I know that there are people tonight with very distressing circumstance in life. I can think of a family tonight who would give everything they've ever accumulated for the assurance that the particular crisis that has come into life would be death with happily.

It would pass away. But it can't. And the problem is there you see that in a crisis people are prepared to do everything and anything.

But when the crisis passes then all these things are brought back in again. Prayer goes and the words were cast overboard are brought back in.

How often does this happen? Maybe you're here like that tonight. Do you remember that time?

Things weren't going very well. You were disturbed, upset. I don't know what it was. But you began to pray and you began to make promises and you gave this up and you gave the next thing up and these things were thrown overboard.

The crisis passed. And tonight where are you? You're back where you were. Perhaps further away from the Lord than you ever were.

[26 : 35] The evidence that we have of the conversion of these men is that their prayer developed into a commitment of their all to the Lord and they sacrificed thankfully to the Lord.

So, here they were trying to save themselves by prayer and trying to save themselves by throwing overboard what they could, but they couldn't.

And they couldn't save themselves because there was one man present who was running away from the Lord. And I came back to that earlier.

Do you wonder about the lack of blessing at congregation level, family level, in the island? You know that it's almost our favorite subject in Christian gatherings.

Why is this island not being blessed the way it was in days gone by? We seem to have an obsession with revival. As if God cannot work unless things happen the way they happened in 1920 and 1930.

[27 : 45] Well, thankfully, God does work. But the point is, why? Why are things so low spiritually? Well, here's the same answer.

These men in that ship are not being saved because Jonah was there in a state of disobedience.

What about you? And what about me tonight? Are we the reason for the blessing of salvation being withheld?

And then this other interesting man comes to this fore now. The other point that God used in bringing Jonah to obedience. The ship's captain. Jonah by this time was gone down to the side of the ship and he lay fast asleep.

And the ship came to him and said unto him, What meanest thou asleep? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not.

[28 : 49] Now, of course, a lot is made of Jonah being asleep in the side of the ship. I don't know what kind of ship it was, but somehow or other, he managed to find a place when he got on board where he slept.

He fell asleep. No, it's not possible the poor man was physically shattered, exhausted, with the accession of running away from God. There are times when your spirit is so low it affects your body and you're fatigued and all you can do is sleep.

It may be that Jonah was just fatigued. It may be as some people say that was the evidence of his lack of spirituality that in the midst of this terrific storm when others were crying in prayer to God and throwing everything overboard, it may very well be that this man was so far away from God and his consciousness and his mind that he couldn't care less and he slept soundly through it all until this man stumbled over, probably looking for things that he could throw overboard.

He came across this man sleeping, sleeping in the sides of the ship and he was astounded that any man could be on board that ship and not pray.

Astounded that this should be the case. Now, it may very well be that there are people in that situation.

[30 : 17] You know, when a person, let me give you an example of this kind of thing, when a person is converted, you know, if a person is wonderfully converted, say suddenly, I must say that every conversion is sudden, I don't believe that, I believe that Mount Georgia conversions are gradual.

Let's say just now a sudden conversion, someone comes to the Lord and he sees the wonder of it all, the newness of it all, he hears a sermon and he walks into a church, his heart is open and his mind and his understanding and he hears a sermon and he's converted to Christ and he can't understand why others don't believe what he's believed, can't understand why they don't see what he sees, why do they not pray to the God who hears prayer as he has prayed, he just can't understand this and maybe there's something that element here, here's this captain, he finds Jonah, he's asleep and he says, why are you not praying?

Well, maybe there are people in the congregation tonight who are like that, maybe you're wondering why other people aren't praying with you, but if I'm not, the majority of people are in the other category than Jonah, maybe this complaint's addressed to you and to me, my friend, awake thou that sleepest and call upon thy God.

Are you praying tonight? Did you pray before you came to this service tonight? Did you pray for the conversion of your family, your children, your parents, your brothers, your sister?

Did you pray for the conversion of your friends, those in the same street as you? How much time did you spend tonight in prayer, just isolating this one evening, asleep?

[32 : 12] Did you wake to pray before you came? how many have saturated a service like this with prayer before they leave their own home to come to it?

Again, the question, why is the church so dead? Why are so few conversions? Well, are you praying for these things? Or are you asleep?

Spiritually asleep. Asleep when you ought to be praying. Asleep when you ought to be witnessing there were these heathen sailors. What an opportunity for this man of God. A prophet, remember? A prophet anointed to be a prophet with a message from the Lord. And there he is. And when they could do with a message of hope and comfort to direct them to the God who saves and who hears prayer, he's asleep.

How many people hear you speaking about the Lord, witnessing to the saving grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ? When some duty ought to be done, something ought to be attended to, are you the very one who ought to be doing it?

[33 : 30] Asleep. And notice this, when you and I are asleep and the finger of accusation is leveled against us, notice how easy it is for you to make excuses for being asleep.

Are you like that tonight? Are you a Christian church this evening, making excuses day after day for your own spiritual slumber and sloth?

Get up, he says, call upon my God, if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not.

Get up and pray! Oh, what an accusation this was against the man of God, the only man on board who knew how to pray, who had a God to pray to, and he has to be reminded of it by a heathen captain on board that ship.

Get up! Call upon thy God! Ah, well, as I said, perhaps here we have another lesson for each one of us here tonight.

[34 : 50] Get up and call upon thy God. I believe that some people were somewhat, I will use the word disconcerted, I think that I could use a stronger word, perhaps a word like hurt, that I made reference to your last Sabbath evening to the way things used to be in your own life with reference to prayer, both private and public.

Well, of course, that kind of reaction is the price that we in the pulpit have to pay for trying to apply the word of God to the conscience of everyone present.

But let me say this to you, if it's any comfort to you, I would like to think that before I apply any teaching the word of God to you, that I apply it first of all to myself, and I bring myself into it with you.

And if it be, my friend, that this is a message for you, arise, O sleeper, call upon thy God privately and publicly, be sure that you are where you are to be, when you are to be, if that does spurred you to say to his congregation, if that cat fits, wear it, and wear it so you don't need it.

Perhaps there's a message for you yet again. But there was one other thing that God used to bring Jonah as it were into the light, to bring him to nail his color to the mask, the old practice of casting lots.

[36 : 32] So they said, everyone to his fellow, come, let us cast lots that we may know, for whose cause is evil upon us. So they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Now all I'm going to say about that is this, that it was a practice, as you know, it was used even in the New Testament to choose an apostle who would take over Judas Iscariot's place amongst the twelve.

They cast lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias. But the point here is this, that you and I, you and I don't need to resort to lots. You and I have the word of God.

We have to, we've got the revelation that they didn't have. The word tells you when you are out of your place. The word reminds you where you ought to be.

It tells you who you are and what you ought to be doing. I don't think that I read anyone next door to you tonight to knock your door and say to you, look, I think really that you're out of the way.

[37 : 35] You know that in the light of the word of God. But you see, in those days, they had to resort to this kind of thing from time to time, and God used it. To point the finger at Jonah, he was discovered, he was found out, the lot fell upon Jonah.

If there's one text in the Bible that strikes terror into my bones, it is this, be sure your sin will find you out.

The Lord fell on a man. He was interviewed, interrogated, by these frightened men, terror-stricken men.

They said to him, tell us, we pray, whose cause this evil has come upon us. Where are you from? What do you do? Where are you from? What's your name? What country do you come from? What is your religion? What kind of people do you belong to? And that brought Jonah to make this confession.

[38 : 53] Well, as we come now to look at this confession, and I do it in a word, notice what Jonah does. You know, it's almost a sense of relief that you hear Jonah replying to these men, I'm a Hebrew, I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

And he went on to tell them that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord. Well, what does he do? Well, he's brought to the point where he must identify himself.

He must reveal himself, and he must tell what he is, who he is, and why he's there. So he tells the whole lot, he comes clean. He tells them the whole story, and he begins with the biggest stigma of all.

I am a Hebrew. Now, that was in the presence of the heathen, that really was a stigma, to identify himself as a Jew, a Hebrew.

Same with a Christian. The biggest stigma you can carry around with in the world today is to identify yourself as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, a New Testament Christian, a Biblical Christian.

[40 : 08] One who believes, as he went on to say, one who believes in the God of heaven, the creator of the ends of the earth, the saviour of the world, one who claims that God has spoken to him, God has saved him by his power, that God has commissioned him and directed him, that God has revealed himself to him.

He revealed all these things to them. He was fleeing, remember, from the presence of the Lord, the place where God had revealed himself and identified himself. He told them the Lord.

That was his confession. And if it be that, and I don't know if it is or not, but if it be that anyone here tonight is concealing his identity as a Christian, let me say this to you, you'll never prosper.

on that path, never. I know that there are times when it isn't easy to identify yourself. I know that there are times when you would almost cower into your shell, retreat into your shell, and almost hope against hope that no one will ask you where you're from, or maybe ask you what church you go to, or ask you what you believe.

You're almost hoping that that won't be the case. I've told you already here that if you ever find yourself as a Christian in a situation where it is difficult for you to identify yourself as a believer, do it as quickly as you possibly can.

[41 : 35] Nail your color to the mast immediately, because if you don't, it'll become more and more difficult for you to do. I think that is why, it's interesting you know that when we as Kirk Sessions interview people for admission to the Lord's table for the first time, I've noticed this quite frequently,

old people when they come for membership, older people rather, they have, they seem to envy the young because, and I think that this is true, because they think that it is easier in a sense, it's not easy for anyone to become a member, but they think that it's easier for a young person than it is for them.

I think there's something in that. The longer you put it off, the more difficult it is for you to confess Christ publicly. Nail your colors to the mast immediately.

Now, Jonah didn't do that, and you know, before he came to acknowledge this, the Lord had taken him along a very difficult and a very rough way indeed.

And so it will be for you and for me that here this man acknowledges what he was, acknowledges his wrong and running away from God.

I am a Hebrew. And it's because of me that this storm has come into your life. And here now you come, you see the account developing, and I just run through it very briefly, in case I'm taking too long to this, the account of the conversion, when they said to him, well, tell us what then will we do so the sea will be calm.

[43 : 28] And he said, take me up, cast me forth into the sea, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless, the men rode hard to bring you to the land, but they couldn't, for the sea wrought was tempestuous against them.

Now, what you have here is this. You have the fear of the sailors brought to light here.

They were afraid because now they recognize something that they hadn't seen before. They recognize the hand of God in this great event, in this great storm.

They were exceedingly afraid. They were afraid before because of the storm itself. Now they were more than ordinarily afraid because they recognized the supernatural in it all.

God was behind all this. It was something extra in their experience.

[44 : 39] And so it is when someone is being brought to recognize and to know the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, when things begin to, when things upset them, when there's this turmoil, this upset, this overthrow in their life, when their whole life, when their life is overthrown, the stability of it, is upset, things don't become immediately better, things seem to get worse and worse and worse.

Instead of fear subsiding, fear increases. Fear increases. And I would say this to you, who knows, I don't know, but there may be some people here tonight like that.

That if it be that you're not finding the peace that you thought you would, don't despair my friend, don't despair, God has a purpose, God has a purpose in doing a, in dealing with you like that.

Because someone may say, why did the storm not abate? When Jonah confessed, when he nailed his color to the mast, when he told them who he was and what he was, and it was because of him the storm had always said, why then did the storm not abate?

That's a good question to which there's a very good answer. For two reasons, because God wasn't, hadn't brought these sailors to the knowledge of himself, he wasn't finished with them, and he wasn't finished with Jonah.

[46 : 10] Jonah had still things to learn in the storm, and the sailors had still things to learn in the storm. There's a classic example of this in the life of Joseph.

When Joseph's brothers came to him in Egypt, he knew them, but they didn't know him. And you know, for a long time, he kept them in suspense. He was probing, asking them questions about their father, about their brothers, and all the time, he was stirring up their memory, and working on their conscience, and convicting them of the sins of the past.

And someone may say, why did he not tell them at once that he was their brother? God has to learn about yourself and their need of mercy and their need of forgiveness.

Why is the storm in your life? Whatever it may be, why the difficulties, why the problems, why not come into a sense of peace? Because, my friend, God has things to teach you in that storm.

that's why. You have things to learn about yourself yet. You don't know yourself to the extent in which you must know yourself before you cast yourself upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

[47 : 37] You need the blessing and the presence of God to help you to come to that awareness.

And so the storm raised until ultimately Jonah told them, take me up, cast me forth into the sea, so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest upon you.

But they rode hard to bring the ship to land, but they couldn't. However, there are two things that come to light here. Jonah's commitment of himself to the Lord and the men's great heartedness,

what some people refer to as common grace.

You know, there were heathen men, but there's an element of, don't misunderstand me when I say this, I'll use the word in reverse commas, there's an element of goodness in their heart, because they didn't really want to throw this poor man overboard.

Think of throwing a man into the sea. Of course they wouldn't. They thought more of human life than that. They would try to save him and they would try to save themselves.

[48 : 49] They would row as hard as they possibly could to bring the ship to land. But they failed. They failed because God had a purpose for them and a purpose for him.

His purpose for him was this, that he be cast into the sea. Therefore they cried unto the Lord and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's sake, nay not upon his innocent blood.

For thou Lord hast done us it pleased. So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea and the sea ceased from her raging.

And here again you have an element of the supernatural. Twice Jonah persuaded that God was able to do for him what he couldn't think himself.

Why should this man ask to be thrown into the sea? Was this man having what we would call suicidal tendencies? No, my friend, no. Perish a thought.

[50 : 02] He believed that God would look after him. So he cast himself into the hand of God. I think that comes to light here in Jonah's commitment of himself to God.

It is the Lord who has wrought the storm. It is the Lord who has brought me to this condition. Therefore I will cast myself into his hand.

He recognized the hand of the Lord and so he abandons himself to God. This was David's prayer. Let me fall into the hand of the Lord.

You know one of the hymn writers puts it like this. Let me lose myself and find it Lord in thee. Let all self be slain. My friends see only thee.

Though it cost me grief and pain, I will find my life again. Let me lose myself and find it Lord in thee.

[51 : 08] That is man at his best. When he commences all to the Lord, cost what it may, that is surrendering yourself to the Lord.

Give him your all. For what shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

And then there is this and with this I close the evidence of their conversion. They tried to save him but they couldn't because God's purpose for them was not yet fulfilled.

And then their prayer. They cry to the Lord with this prayer Lord we beseech thee. And that is an element I think ought to be present in the conversion of every individual young or old.

When a man becomes a beggar in the presence of God we beseech thee. Man is the beggar not God.

[52 : 16] Man it is we who need his presence. We need his blessing. He doesn't need us. He can do without you my friend. But I tell you this you cannot do without him.

Are you begging God tonight for his mercy and his blessing and his peace? We beseech thee oh God. You know this modern idea of conversion.

I did this and I did that and I gave myself to the Lord. Ah my friend in conversion you do nothing but you take from him what he gives you.

We beseech thee. Make us beggars and debtors to the grace of God. That is the element in conversion.

It leaves you with nothing but what God can give you. they feared the Lord exceedingly.

[53 : 27] Lord thou hast done it. Thou hast done as a plea. There's something else. The emphasis placed upon his sovereignty. Thou knowest.

Thou art in control. Thou art all the supernatural in the conversion of the individual. God is all and in all.

He matters supremely. Thou hast done as thou hast pleased.

So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the raging sea. And the sea ceased from raging.

Again the supernatural in Jonah. The sea stood up. The idea here is that the sea was obedient to the command.

[54 : 28] God created the storm and God created the calm. It was his hand that did it all. This was not the work of man. This was the work of God.

God did it. And in conversion the glory is all his. This is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes.

He brought peace. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly. And you know the meaning of that word now when it is connected with the Lord in the Bible.

Their heart went out to him. They loved him. They revered him. They respected him. They honoured him greatly. They fell down before him. He was everything.

And they were nothing. And they sacrificed unto the Lord and made vows. There must have been something left on board that ship that they offered as a sacrifice to God.

[55 : 26] I don't know what it was. But it was sufficient anyway to be offered as a sacrifice. And it was a sacrifice of thanksgiving that they offered to the Lord and they made vows.

Again you always have this in conversion. The glory is given to God for what he's done. And some yes you have in conversion.

Vows are made. Promises are made. Now you may say to me oh yes I know people who made promises in a crisis.

You were speaking about that earlier weren't you? People maybe who were ill at home or in hospital and they made all kinds of promises and I saw them even at services and they joined the camp they came forward and they made vows they made promise but where are these things gone now?

Ah my friend there was a difference. You remember that when these men made these vows the storm had passed and the sea was calm. This was not the promise or the vow that a person makes in a crisis Lord if you take me out of this I will be this and I will be that and I will be the next thing make me better save me from this deliver me from this problem and I will do this for you oh no they had been delivered when they made their vow to the Lord a vow of commitment to his grace and to his mercy is there a message for you here tonight maybe from does it speak to you does it trouble you does it encourage you well my friend don't rest till like them and like Jonah you commit your way to the

[57 : 15] Lord