



**June 8, 2025**

**Title: “The God of Second Chances”**

**Scripture: [Jonah 2](#)**

A little more background information on Jonah:

- Jonah was the son of Amittai whose name means “true and faithful.” A good and Godly dad?
- Jonah’s name means “dove.” A flighty person? (Peter’s name was originally “Simon bar Jonah” - his personality? But he became “Peter”, the Rock - the God of second chances
- God’s call to Jonah as a prophet was received (the 5th of the 12 minor prophets)
- Jonah prophesied in the mid 8th century
- Jonah’s one prophecy is recorded in [2 Kings 14:25](#)

**25** *He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel,*

*which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.*

**The book of Jonah** is about this prophet's faith journey: God's recall to faithfulness as he breaks Jonah's hard heart. **More specifically, God was dealing with Jonah's pride:**

- **Proverbs 16:18**

***18** Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

- Pride is the most egregious of sins. It's what caused the devil to become the devil. It's the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. It's the one sin that will send you to hell if not repented of
- God's call to Jonah was to go to Nineveh and preach his mercy to them
- Nineveh/Assyria were godless, reprobate, violent, and wicked in every way
- The way they treated their captives was abysmal and horrendous
- Legend: Was there evil done to Amittai, Jonah's dad? Is this partly why Jonah SO hated the Assyrians?
- Bitterness consumed his heart
- Jonah's pride and arrogance is on display
- Jonah runs in the other direction from Nineveh toward Tarshish (500 miles east to Nineveh; 2500 miles west to Tarshish)
- **This is key: GOD** causes a storm to come and **GOD** increases the fury of the storm
- Note: God does all of this! If you wrestle with God, you will lose
- Sailors plead to their idols and row furiously toward shore - but all to no avail. If you wrestle with God, you will lose
- They awaken Jonah to ask him to pray to his God
- Jonah notes that he's the reason for the storm and tells them to throw him overboard (he'd rather die than go to Nineveh)
- They finally do so, and the storm ceases. Notice that God shows mercy toward pagan sailors

**Jonah 1:17**

***17** And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

- The Lord appointed the great fish to swallow Jonah

- Did Jonah die in the water? Then swallowed by the fish? Then brought back to life in the belly of the great fish?
- Or was he alive in the water? Then swallowed by the fish? Then died in the fish and brought back to life?
- Or alive through it all? And this was an NDE (a near death experience)
- Reminder of connection to **Matthew 12:38-40** and Jesus's words last week

## Jonah 2: Jonah's prayer

### Jonah 2:1-2

**1** Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, **2** saying, "I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.

- God is breaking Jonah's PRIDE
- Think about Jonah's condition: unable to move...it's difficult to breathe...he's in a clammy, humid darkness...there's a suffocating stench from dead fish eaten by the great fish...his skin is bleaching white from the bile of the great fish...seaweed covering his body...there's constant movement and motion from the fish... Was there nausea?
- Remember: the fish was appointed by God. This difficult situation also must have been appointed by God
- Sometimes God forms our circumstances to stink, all options gone, and we can only look up
- An NDE (near death experience): the reference to Sheol in **verse 2** (a glimpse of hell)? Before or after death? Later in **verse 6** we have the pit reference
- Jonah had only one place to turn: **God**

### Jonah 2:3-7

**3** For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. **4** Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' **5** The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head **6** at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought

*up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. 7 When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.*

- “YOU cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas.” This was all God’s doing!
- Flood surrounded Jonah
- Waves and billows passed over him
- Driven away from God’s sight...
- These are all phrases from the **Psalms** (had Jonah memorized them as a child? Were the Psalms codified by then by the Jews?)
- A glimmer of hope in **verse 4b**: “I shall look again on your holy temple” - I will see Jerusalem again: a faith confession
- Back to despair in **verse 5**: Waters overwhelm me, to take my life (imagine feeling like you’re drowning)
- Seaweed wrapped around his head
- At the roots of the mountains: Means the bottom of the sea, its floor suggests the great fish going up and down in the ocean
- **Verse 6**: Like prison bars, solitary confinement
- **Verse 6b**: A note of hope! Still alive! Life from the “pit” (another term for hell)
- Is this a reference again to an NDE? - a near death experience? Or a glimpse of hell
- **Verse 7**: “My life is fainting away”...but “I remembered the Lord”
- Did Jonah remember his call? (It’s what has kept me going through the years)
- **Romans 11:29**  
**29** *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*
- And Jonah prayed to God: “into your temple” (perhaps a memory of praying there?)
- When God is taking your through a tough time, always remember a time of closeness you once had with the Lord

### **Jonah 2:8-9**

**8** *Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.*

**9** *But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!”*

- You see Jonah's faith building: In **verse 8** he remembers God's mercy to the pagan sailors who worshipped idols
- They didn't die in the storm!
- With thanksgiving: Jonah remembers all of God's blessings to him (gratitude is God's antidote to pride. Realize that all is a gift from him) You can't be prideful and thankful at the same time
- Jonah recommits to sacrifice in the Temple (where animal sacrifices are given for forgiveness)
- He commits to pay what he has vowed (keep his promises to God: the tithe, sacrifices)
- Finally, and this is key: **Verse 9** - He understands grace and mercy
- "Salvation belongs to the Lord" - all salvation is **SOLELY** God's work
- Eternal salvation! All other salvations/deliverances/blessings...not our works!
- Jonah finally realized this great truth about God, and then and only then, God instructed the fish:

### Jonah 2:10

**10** *And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.*

- The LORD spoke to the fish (the one HE appointed)
- The fish vomited Jonah out
- He was spit out on **dry** land (I bet dryness never felt so good to Jonah)

Spoiler alert (next week): **God calls Jonah again to go to Nineveh, Assyria and prophesy against it in Jonah 3:1-2.** And Jonah finally obeys.

God is the **God of the second chance!**

But often he must first break us of our human pride, self-sufficiency, and self-dependence before he can really use us!

**Is this you? Is God breaking you? If so...**

- Go limp in your fish/circumstances
- Let God do his work in you (in the fish/circumstances)
- Keep declaring words of faith and hope

- Be thankful for what he has given to you
- God's mercy is greater than your sin
- Now go and be faithful to what he has clearly called you to do...**NOW!**
- **In Jesus' resurrection power that now lives in you!**