



When The Mercy Of God Touches The Misery Of Man

Text: Jonah 2: 1-10

¹ Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, ² And 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. ³ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst^a of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. ⁴ Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. ⁵ The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. ⁶ I went down to the bottoms^b of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. ⁷ When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. ⁸ They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. ⁹ But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

¹⁰ And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

The Lord asked Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry against it...Nineveh was a wicked city and the wickedness of the people had piled up so high that, spiritually speaking, it literally reached God's throne.

Up to this point, for all practical purposes, it looks as though Jonah had the favor of God upon His life. If that had not been the case God would not have asked Jonah to go to Nineveh.

Everything began to change for the worse when Johan made the calculated error of going against God's desire. Jonah flees the presence of the Lord and goes to Tarshish by way of ship from Joppa. From all earthly perspectives, Jonah wasn't doing anything wrong...after all...he paid for his fare...but the Lord knew better!

If we could only see through His eyes! It is possible when we pray and fast! This is our opportunity to really get extra close to Jesus and sow some spiritual seed together as a unified team!

So Jonah is out in the sea on this ship sailing along.

Then all of a sudden...whoooooo (you can hear the sound of the wind!) whoooooo

The Lord had sent out a great wind into the sea...and that wind turned into a mighty tempest...like a hurricane...it was so powerful that the ship was about to break!

So the men were afraid...and in the process each of them cried out to whoever their god was....**Isn't it wonderful to know who the real true God really is?!**

The result of this fear was that they began to throw out the goods they had on board the ship to hopefully reduce the risk of sinking.

And where was Jonah while all of this was going on? He was asleep in the side of the ship, down below deck,...so the captain came to him and said..."What meanest thou...O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." Ironically a pagan ship **captain** had to call a man of God to prayer!

The captain was desperate; in his mind, every known **god** should be appealed to so that one might grant relief from their peril. I am so glad that God is better than Super Wal-Mart...you get everything you need all in one place!

Then something very interesting happened...While the captain attempted to arouse Jonah (v- 6), **the sailors** concluded that the tragic storm was the result of divine wrath on the wrongdoing of some man on board, so the men got together and began casting lots to determine the course of action. Casting lots was a common practice during times of heavy

decision in those days... in Israel and Middle eastern countries. One possible way was for marked stones to be placed in a container it might be shaken up and one stone would be taken out....so little did they know that the true Almighty God Jehovah caused the lot fall on His disobedient prophet.... Jonah....even though these men probably each thought their own god did the work. We know who really did the work! The Lord Strong and Powerful!

So they asked Jonah.....who caused this...and why is this happening? An honest question deserves an honest answer. They peppered him with questions: What do you do for a living Johan? Where do you come from Johan? Who are your people? And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD^c, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dryland. ¹⁰ Then were the men exceedingly^d 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.

Now all of a sudden the lights have been turned on in the minds of these rugged seamen! They now understand! All the while the boat is rocking back and forth on these massive ocean swells!

They wanted to know what they should do to cause the sea to be calm....Jonah said the most shocking thing.....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.

The men really didn't want to do it....so they must have had some niceness in their bones. There was some tender mercy within the hearts of these rugged seamen.

Nevertheless....these men realized that the storm just was not going to go away unless they did something very drastic...they began to realize they needed the true God....that their gods were just not sufficient....I find that very interesting...that in life's worst struggles...people almost instinctively know who to turn to.....something within the deep soul conscious of man is an inner instinctive knowledge that there really is a genuine God! And these men cried out to Him.....since their efforts were getting them nowhere....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.

So they took Jonah up...

They threw Jonah into the sea.....and immediately the sea became calm! It was as though God did not want there to be any doubt in Jonah's mind or in the mind of the men on the ship that this was all the hand of the Almighty!

Utterly amazed at the sudden calm, **they offered a sacrifice in praise to the Lord** (*Yahweh*, Israel's God) and promised (**made vows**) to continue their praise....even in disobedience...there was such a strong call on Jonah's life for souls to be saved that even in this incident....the Lord caused seamen to believe!

Johan did not die, however. No doubt all the men expected that Jonah would drown...but no so!

God provided a fish to swallow Jonah...we must never forget that God is sovereign and that God is central to all that happens....both good or bad....God is God no matter the circumstances....

So this great fish was probably a sperm whale or a whale shark....God controls everything in the sea....why is it that sometimes it is easier for God to control wild mammals than it is for God to control human beings who should be in submission to Him?

The Answer is very simple: **The Will! It is either submitted to God or it isn't!**

So here Jonah is...

In spite of all this.....The Mercy of God reached way down and touched the misery of man. Being out of the plan of God is a recipe for sure misery....Jonah was a miserable man at this point...but the whale should not be looked at as punishment for Jonah...God could have allowed Jonah to drown in the ocean!

God sent the whale out of a merciful heart! The whale was to preserve Jonah's life...even though it must have been super yucky....it was better than drowning and dying in a state of rebellion! Remember that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft according to scripture!

God knows just how to balance His love, discipline, patience, and judgment..... He knows just when to send the storm...He knows how to work through the hearts of unbelievers and believers alike...and He knows just how to touch

the misery of man with His incredible Mercy....

Jonah was never the same again after that massive fish spit Jonah out on the dry land...and the mercy of God let Jonah still perform His will to the point of an entire city repenting before God!

Perhaps you are in a place right now in your life where you understand God wants you to do a certain thing...but you can't see it becoming a reality...can I tell you that the mercy of God will meet you in that place of misery...the misery I am speaking of isn't so much in the physical realm...but in the realm of disobedience....that is the worst kind of misery.....when we obey God...He takes care of all the rest of our needs.....simply obey God and you will at least have the peace of mind that He is pleased....and since He controls this universe....don't we think that He can send the warm breeze of blessing our way right on time? Amen!

Ephesians 2:4 ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained^b that we should walk in them.

^a midst: Heb. heart

^b bottoms: Heb. cuttings off

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^c the LORD: or, JEHOVAH

^d exceedingly...: Heb. with great fear

^b ordained: or, prepared