

Jonah

God's Grace in Your Mess

Jonah 2; Luke 15

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What is God telling us about Jonah's heart, about our hearts, and most importantly, about God's own heart?

[Jonah 2]

For most of us, the journey towards Christlikeness is long, winding, and painfully slow. It can be discouraging, even overwhelming, but God's grace can give us hope even when our lives feel like a complete mess.

I. God sees you in your mess

Jonah's physical, spiritual, and emotional life was a mess, but even then, God saw him.

Jonah 1:17 "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah..."

[Luke 15]

God's power and kindness are working for our good, not because He sent a fish to save us, but because He sent His son Jesus to save us. He saw you, He saw your mess, and He didn't look away. He's not afraid to get in the mess with you.

II. God meets you in your mess

It was necessary for God to strip away everything that Jonah had built his life on, so that He and Jonah could finally meet heart-to-heart.

"You may never know that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have."

~ Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*

Jonah 2:5-6 "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."

God goes to Jonah and meets him where he is.

The prodigal son in Luke 15 would have been a physical, spiritual, and emotional mess just like Jonah, yet his father ran to him, grabbed him in a hug, kissed him, and started to restore the son's life.

Ephesians 1:3-8 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love ⁵ He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace ⁸ that He lavished on us.

III. God stays with you in your mess

At this point, Jonah still has not repented, yet God still hasn’t left him.

Romans 8:31-39 “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, ‘For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You cannot separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Such is the grace of God - His power and kindness at work on behalf of those of us who do not deserve it!

IV. God doesn’t leave you in the mess

Jonah 2:10 “And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”

The fact that Jonah survived the storm and the fish means that God was not done with him yet. The fact that you are still alive, and hearing my voice today means that God is not done with you either!

Philippians 1:3-6 “Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”