

The Parish of Wellow

Jonah 2:1-9 'Prayer from the Pit'

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – Jonah 2:1-9 (Page 978 in the pew Bibles)

1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.

2 He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

4 I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

5 The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God.

7 "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.

9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD."

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Jonah's Mission – Jonah 1:2

- "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." What a challenge for Jonah.
- Nineveh was about 500 miles from Jerusalem its site being very near modern day Mosul in Iraq.



- In this short book of just four chapters we see:
 - i. Jonah forsake his mission in Chapter 1
 - ii. Jonah regret his actions and God rescue him in Chapter 2
 - iii. Jonah fulfil his mission Chapters 3 and 4

2.2 Jonah forsakes his mission (Jonah 1:3-17)

- Like Jonah we have been told to call the 'Ninevehs' of our day to repentance. Jesus told his followers to: *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* (Matthew 28:19-20)
- To fulfil this task we too will need to operate outside our 'comfort zones'.
- Like Jonah we can 'run' and fill our lives with busyness.
- In his haste to run from God Jonah neglects his prayer life and we can neglect our prayer lives as we become absorbed by our families, hobbies, charitable work, careers or interest groups.
- Jonah learns the hard way that *"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."* (Jonah 2:8) We can run away from our Christian responsibilities. We can turn our backs on God but what we will discover is that our lives will become a mess. That is what Jonah discovers
- Sitting in the belly of that whale Jonah cannot run any further. He is forced to spend quality time with God.

2.3 Jonah regrets his actions and God rescues him (Joshua 2:1-9)

- Does God really need to bring us to a point of crisis to get our attention? That is what God does with Jonah. With the wind and waves raging, having been thrown overboard by his fellow sailors Jonah remembers God and begins to pray in earnest verse 7: *"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.* God graciously rescues Jonah by having him swallowed inside a whale.

2.4 Jonah fulfils his mission (Jonah 3-4)

- *What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.* (Jonah 2:9) Having come to his senses Jonah promises God that he will now do what he asks and go to Nineveh and preach repentance.
- Jonah finds when he gets to Nineveh that God has gone before him and prepared the hearts of the Ninevites to receive God's message of repentance. A decree goes out from the king and his nobles: *Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.* (Jonah 3:8)
- *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.* (Jonah 3:10)
- If only Jonah had trusted God from the word go. Surely this story must encourage us as we face the difficult task of preaching repentance to the modern day 'Ninevites' around us.

3. Questions to consider at home?

- 3.1 Why is Jonah so reluctant to fulfil his mission? Why are we so reluctant to fulfil ours?
- 3.2 How outward looking as a church are we? How outward looking are you?
- 3.3 How would you describe Jonah's prayer life? What about yours?
- 3.4 Are you '*clinging to any worthless idols*'?
- 3.5 Where are you in Jonah's story? a) Running from God b) In a 'belly of the whale moment' or c) Out bringing the harvest home.

The Parish of Wellow

Jonah 2:1-9 'Prayer from the Pit'

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – Jonah 2:1-9 (Page 978 in the pew Bibles)

1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.

2 He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

4 I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

5 The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God.

7 "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.

9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD."

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Jonah's Mission – Jonah 1:2

- "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." What a challenge for Jonah.
- Nineveh was about 500 miles from Jerusalem its site being very near modern day Mosul in Iraq.



- In this short book of just four chapters we see:
 - i. Jonah forsake his mission in Chapter 1
 - ii. Jonah regret his actions and God rescue him in Chapter 2
 - iii. Jonah fulfil his mission Chapters 3 and 4

2.2 Jonah forsakes his mission (Jonah 1:3-17)

- Like Jonah we have been told to call the 'Ninevehs' of our day to repentance. Jesus told his followers to: *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* (Matthew 28:19-20)
- To fulfil this task we too will need to operate outside our 'comfort zones'.
- Like Jonah we can 'run' and fill our lives with busyness.
- In his haste to run from God Jonah neglects his prayer life and we can neglect our prayer lives as we become absorbed by our families, hobbies, charitable work, careers or interest groups.
- Jonah learns the hard way that *"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."* (Jonah 2:8) We can run away from our Christian responsibilities. We can turn our backs on God but what we will discover is that our lives will become a mess. That is what Jonah discovers
- Sitting in the belly of that whale Jonah cannot run any further. He is forced to spend quality time with God.

2.3 Jonah regrets his actions and God rescues him (Joshua 2:1-9)

- Does God really need to bring us to a point of crisis to get our attention? That is what God does with Jonah. With the wind and waves raging, having been thrown overboard by his fellow sailors Jonah remembers God and begins to pray in earnest verse 7: *"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.* God graciously rescues Jonah by having him swallowed inside a whale.

2.4 Jonah fulfils his mission (Jonah 3-4)

- *What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.* (Jonah 2:9) Having come to his senses Jonah promises God that he will now do what he asks and go to Nineveh and preach repentance.
- Jonah finds when he gets to Nineveh that God has gone before him and prepared the hearts of the Ninevites to receive God's message of repentance. A decree goes out from the king and his nobles: *Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.* (Jonah 3:8)
- *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.* (Jonah 3:10)
- If only Jonah had trusted God from the word go. Surely this story must encourage us as we face the difficult task of preaching repentance to the modern day 'Ninevites' around us.

3. Questions to consider at home?

- 3.1 Why is Jonah so reluctant to fulfil his mission? Why are we so reluctant to fulfil ours?
- 3.2 How outward looking as a church are we? How outward looking are you?
- 3.3 How would you describe Jonah's prayer life? What about yours?
- 3.4 Are you '*clinging to any worthless idols*'?
- 3.5 Where are you in Jonah's story? a) Running from God b) In a 'belly of the whale moment' or c) Out bringing the harvest home.