

“The Prayer Of Faith”
Jonah 2:2-4

Introduction:

1. How Much Do You Pray?
 - One Of The Greatest Gifts That God Gives To His People:
 - Is The Gift Of Prayer!
 - Simply Talking With The Lord!
 - Our Creator & Our Savior!
 - And Yet, How Many Times Do We Ignore This Gift?
 - How Many Times Do You Even Forget To Pray Throughout The Day?
 - And Live Your Life In Prayerlessness!
2. Up Until Jonah Chapter 2:
 - We Find Jonah Living A Life Of Prayerlessness!
 - He Too Ignored His Gift!
 - He Too Failed To Pray!
 - And Look What Happened To Him!
 - Prayerlessness Is A Dangerous Condition For Any Christian!
 - And God Will Often Do Whatever It Takes To Get Your Attention, And Bring You Back To Himself & To Prayer!
 - Because A Healthy Christian Is A Praying Christian!
3. And This Is What We Find In Jonah Chapter 2:
 - Jonah’s Prayer Of Faith!
 - And Even Though His Body Was Stuck Inside The Great Fish God Sent To Deliver Him!
 - His Heart & His Mind & Even His Voice Could Still Go To The Lord In Prayer!
 - And What A Prayer It Was!
 - After 3 Days & 3 Nights In The Belly Of The Fish:
 - Jonah Prayed A Prayer Of Thanksgiving To God!
 - And After His Deliverance From The Sea & The Fish:
 - While Writing His Story:
 - Jonah Turned His Prayer Into A Psalm!
 - The Prayer We Read In Chapter 2:
 - Is A Beautiful Hebrew Poem!
 - Filled With Imagery & Style!
 - And Sounds In Many Ways Like The Psalms Of The Old Testament!
 - “When Jonah Is Moved To Pray, The Vocabulary And Faith Of The Psalms Find Expression In His Prayer!” (Rick Phillips)
 - Let’s Read Jonah’s Prayer Together:
 - 2:1-9 - “Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish’s belly, / 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. / For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. / Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. / The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. / I went down to the bottoms 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. / When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. / They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. / But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD!”
 - Jonah’s Prayer Is Full Of:
 - Reflection & Remembrance Of What He Was Going Through & What He Felt:
 - As He Was Sinking Further & Further Into The Mediterranean Sea!
 - As Well As What He Did! When He “Cried” Out To The Lord!
 - It Is Also A Prayer Of Thanksgiving:
 - For The Lord’s Deliverance!
 - Not Deliverance From The Fish!
 - Because Jonah Prayed This Prayer From Inside The Fish!
 - But A Deliverance From Guilt & Death!
 - A Death That Jonah Deserved!

- And From His Watery Grave!
- To Really Understand & Appreciate Jonah's Prayer:
 - Once Again, We Need To Go Through It More Slowly & Carefully!
 - There Are 3 Main Sections Of Jonah's Prayer-Poem:
 - 2:2-4 - From Hopelessness To Hope!
 - 2:5-7 - Jonah's Despair & Deliverance!
 - 2:8-9 - Praise & A Promise For The Lord's Salvation!
- 4. This Morning, We Are Going To Focus On The First Section Of Jonah's Prayer-Poem: 2:2-4:
 - Where Jonah Learns Not To Trust His Feelings:
 - But Instead Trust In & Turn To The Lord!
 - **IE:** Have You Ever Wondered How A Magician Performs His Tricks? Most Tricks Are Actually Illusions - Trying To Trick & Fool Our Senses Into Believing Something That Is Not True! One Of The Greatest Living Magicians Is David Copperfield! He Has Even Brought His Tricks & Illusions To Television! Remember Watching When He Made The Statue Of Liberty Disappear / Or When He Walked Through The Great Wall Of China / Or When He Escaped From Alcatraz! Copperfield Was Able To Use Different Techniques To Trick & Fool Our Senses - Into Believing Something That Was Not Real / Not True! Just Left To Try To Figure Out: How Did He Do That?
 - We Too Must Learn That We Are Easily Fooled & Tricked By Our Senses & Our Feelings!
 - What You Feel Is Not Always The Truth!
 - And Jonah Had To Learn This The Hard Way!
- 5. In The First Part Of Jonah's Prayer:
 - He Describes How He Felt As He Was Drowning:
 - He Felt Fearful!
 - He Felt Forsaken!
 - He Felt Forgotten By God!
 - And His Feelings Caused Him To Believe That He Was In An Utterly Hopeless Condition!
 - That He Was As Good As Dead!
 - But Then - He Remembered Some Truths About The Lord:
 - It Wouldn't Have Taken Very Long! It Didn't Have To!
 - And His Faith In The Lord:
 - Triumphed Over His Feelings! And He Had Hope!
 - Your Senses & Feelings Can Be Wrong!
 - But The Truths About God & His Word Are Always Right!
 - And Can Be Believed & Trusted Completely!
 - But How Did Jonah Feel?

1. *He Felt Fearful!*

- 2:2 - "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!"
 - This Is The Beginning Of Jonah's Prayer From The Belly Of The Fish!
 - And It Is An Introduction & A Summary Of What The Lord Did For Him!
 - To Save Him From Drowning In The Depths Of The Sea! We See:
 - Jonah's Assessment Of His Situation:
 - He Didn't Have A Lot Of Time To Think About Things:
 - While He Was Sinking In The Sea!
 - But Later, He Would Be Able To Think More About His Situation & Describe It This Way!
 - He Was In Trouble!
 - He Says: "I Cried By Reason Of Mine Affliction!"
 - Jonah Knew He Was In Trouble!
 - The Storm / Cast Overboard / Sinking!
 - All Orchestrated By The Lord Against Him!
 - And He Was Afraid!
 - He Was In A Tomb!
 - He Further Says: "Out Of The Belly Of Hell (Or Sheol) Cried I!"
 - At This Point, Jonah Felt Like The Water Of The Sea Was His Tomb!
 - And He Was "Swimming With The Fishes!" - As The Mafia Would Describe It!
 - And He Was Afraid!
 - And Fear Can Be A Petrifying Feeling!
 - Fear Can Paralyze You! Thinking There Is No Hope! No Way Out! **IE:** Like Those Who

- Jumped To Their Deaths From The WTC Towers On 9/11!
- What Could Jonah Do? Where Could He Go?
 - “A Time Of Affliction Is A Time Of Prayer!” (John Gill)
- Jonah’s Appeal From His Heart:
 - Jonah Tells The Lord & Us What He Did With His Fear!
 - Two Times He Says:
 - “I Cried” – “Unto The Lord!”
 - He Cried From His Heart!
 - “I Cried By Reason Of Mine Affliction Unto The Lord!”
 - It Was His Heart’s Cry!
 - Even Though Jonah’s Trouble Was Of His Own Making, Yet He Still Believed That God Cared!
 - 1 Peter 5:7 - “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you!”
 - He Cried With His Voice!
 - “Out Of The Belly Of Hell Cried I, And Thou Heardest My Voice!”
 - It Seems Like Jonah Called Out To The Lord With His Very Last Breath!
 - With The Last Few Molecules Of Air In His Lungs, He Cried Out With As Much Voice As He Could Muster!
 - And That Cry Would Pierce Through:
 - All That Water - To The Very Chambers Of Heaven, In An Instant - Where God Would Hear & Answer Him!
- Jonah’s Answer From The Lord:
 - Still Part Of Jonah’s Summary - He Tells The Lord What He Did For Him!
 - The Lord “Heard” Him!
 - The Lord “Heard His Voice!”
 - Jonah Could Sing With Confidence:
 - “Oh, yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares!”
- Jonah Felt Fearful:
 - And He Described His Fear In This Introduction Of His Prayer!
 - And Although, At First, His Fear Made Him Feel Hopeless! He Knew That The Lord Was Greater Than What He Feared!
 - And So, He Turned To The Lord In Faith! And In Prayer!
 - And The Lord Heard Him!
 - And This Is What The Lord Does Every Time!
 - “Though We Bring Our Afflictions Upon Ourselves By Our Sins, Yet, If We Pray In Humility And Godly Sincerity, We Shall Be Welcome To The Throne Of Grace, As Jonah Was!”
 - When You Feel Fearful:
 - Turn To The Lord In Faith!
 - Isaiah 41:10 - “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness!”

2. ***He Felt Forsaken!***

- 2:3 - “For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me!”
 - Beginning In This Verse, Jonah Recalls What Happened As He Was Sinking & Drowning In The Sea!
 - And What It Felt Like!
 - He Felt Like God Had Completely Forsaken And Abandoned Him!
 - Because He Saw God’s Own Hand Of Judgment Upon Him!
 - “Thou” Cast Me Into The Deep!
 - “All Thy Billows & Thy Waves!”
 - He Felt:
 - The Greatest Distance – From The Lord!
 - “For Thou Hadst Cast Me Into The Deep!”
 - He Felt That God Had Cast Him Further Than The Sailors On The Ship Ever Could! Even Away From His Presence!
 - Even Believers Can Feel This Way At Times!

- That God Is So Far Away!
 - And There Is No Hope!
 - Even David - Psalm 88:6 - “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps!”
- But Was This The Truth?
 - Or Was It Just A Feeling? He Felt:
- The Greatest Desolation – By The Lord!
 - “In The Midst Of The Seas!”
 - Jonah Probably Felt Like:
 - All Of The Water In The World Was Surrounding Him!
 - 71% Of The Earth’s Surface Is Water!
 - 332.5 Million Cubic Miles / Each Cubic Mile Is 1.11 Trillion Gallons!
 - Water, Water, Everywhere!
 - And Jonah Felt Like He Was In The Middle Of It All!
 - Isolated! Deserted! Alone!
 - Away From The Presence Of The Lord!
 - As If Nothing Could Reach Him Now!
 - No Rescue Boat!
 - No Safety Line!
 - Now Voice Could Be Heard!
 - But Was This The Truth?
 - Or Was This Just A Feeling? He Felt:
- The Greatest Danger!
 - “And The Floods Compassed Me About!”
 - It Also Felt Like:
 - All The Swift Currents Of The Seas & Rivers & Streams Were Swirling All Around Him!
 - Like A Great Vortex, Sucking Him Down Deeper & Deeper & Further & Further Away From The Surface & From Safety!
 - **IE:** Like The Dangerous Undertow Currents You Feel In The Ocean, That Can Take You Out To Sea!
 - Jonah Was Probably Struggling To Stay Afloat:
 - Struggling For Some Air!
 - But The “Floods” Were Against Him!
 - And Dragged Him Away!
 - He Felt Like There Was No Hope!
 - But Was This The Truth?
 - Or Was This Just A Feeling? He Felt:
- The Greatest Despair!
 - “All Thy Billows And Thy Waves Passed Over Me!”
 - The Powerful Breakers!
 - The Perpetual Waves!
 - Unending! Unrelenting! Unforgiving!
 - Kept Pounding Him Under!
 - Even David Felt This Way!
 - Psalm 42:7 - “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me!”
- Jonah Felt Forsaken By The Lord!
 - What Would You Have Done?
 - What Do Many Do?
 - They Blame The Lord!
 - Even When They Are Suffering The Consequences Of Their Own Choices & Sins – Like Jonah Was!
 - They Turn From The Lord!
 - They Even Turn Against The Lord!
 - But - Were Jonah’s Feelings Reality? The Truth?
 - Or Were They Just Illusions?
 - Remember Paul - 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 - “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; / Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; / Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be

- made manifest in our body!”
- Jonah Was Not Forsaken By The Lord!
 - And Neither Is Any Believer In Jesus Christ!
 - Because Jesus Himself Was Truly Forsaken Of The Father, So You & I Would Never Have To Be!
 - “My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me!” Never Needs To Be Felt By Believers, Because It Was On The Lips Of Jesus Our Savior!
- No Matter How You Forsaken You Might Feel:
 - Have Faith In The Reality Of The Lord & The Truth Of His Word!
 - And Turn To Him! Cry Out To Him In Prayer!

3. *He Felt Forgotten!*

- 2:4 - “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight!”
 - At The Very Point Of His Last Breath:
 - This Was Almost His Final Thought!
- His Situation:
 - “Then I Said!”
 - He Gave In To & Believed His Feelings, And At This Point, Felt There Was Absolutely No Hope!
 - Wouldn’t We?
- His Separation:
 - “I Am Cast Out Of Thy Sight!”
 - This Was Jonah’s Conclusion:
 - After Being Sucked Down To The Bottom Of The Sea!
 - Jonah Tried To Flee From God’s Presence:
 - Now He Believed That God Himself Had Cast Him Out Of His Sight!
 - To The Point That He Was So Far Away Now!
 - **IE**: Just Like A Helium Filled Balloon Getting Further & Further Away!
- Jonah Felt Forgotten By The Lord!
 - But Is This How Things Really Were?
 - No! God Did See Him & Was Watching Him The Whole Time!
 - And Was Actually With Him!
 - Psalm 34:15 - “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry!”
 - Jonah Was Not Forgotten By The Lord!
 - God Never Can Forget His People!
 - God Never Will Forget His People!
 - Remember Noah & The Flood - In The Ark:
 - Rather Lonely Place To Be!
 - Genesis 8:1 - “And God Remembered Noah!”
 - God Remembered Jonah!
 - God Remembers You As Well!

Conclusion:

1. But Then, In Last Part Of 2:4 - A Ray Of Light Comes Into Thee Darkness & Gloom Of Jonah’s Feelings In The Sea!
 - A Hope & A Faith - Given To Him By God!
 - Which Is Why He Then Decides This:
 - “Yet I Will Look Again Toward Thy Holy Temple!”
 - It Wasn’t Too Late For Jonah! It Wasn’t The End Of Jonah!
 - He Believed That The Lord Was Stronger Than His Feelings!
 - And Although It Seemed Like He Was Completely Forsaken & Forgotten By The Lord:
 - Yet, He Would Come To The Lord One More Time! One Last Time!
 - His Last Opportunity In His Life To Look To The Lord In Prayer!
 - Or So He Thought!
2. And So, He Cried Out To The Lord In Faith!
 - Perhaps It Was Just A Single Word: “Help!”
 - But God Heard & Answered & Delivered Jonah From His Watery Grave!
 - What Will You Do With Your Feelings?

- When You Feel Fearful!
- When You Feel Forsaken!
- When You Feel Forgotten!
- Instead Of Listening To & Believing Your Feelings:
 - Instead Of Turning From The Lord & Against Him!
 - Look To The Lord & Trust In Him!
 - And Pray! The Prayer Of Faith!

3. Hebrews 4:15-16 - "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. / Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!"

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