

RESCUED

We have all been in a place where we have needed to be

The story of Jonah is about a guy who lived a long time ago, God said to Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." Jonah 1:2 (ESV)

Well, I guess Jonah was a small-town boy, and not big on going to the city none the less preaching to a bunch of wicked people.

So instead of going to Nineveh, "Jonah went to (Target) LOL! – he went to Tar-shish Jonah was running from the presence of the LORD. He went the opposite way.

"He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So, he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD." Jonah 1:3 (ESV)

As they were sailing along a vast wind blew across the sea creating a violent, massive, destructive storm. It was so powerful that it started breaking the ship apart. The crew was afraid, terrified, and cried out to their gods and even started thrown cargo overboard to lighten the load.

"But Jonah had gone down into the hull of the ship and had laid down and was fast asleep." The captain came and saw him and said "What do you mean you sleeper? Get up! Call out to your God! Maybe He will remember us, that we may not perish."

At this point not sure anything was changing, the storm was still slinging them all over the place, then the crew "said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, in another translation is said "draw straws", NTS so we may know whose fault it is that this evil has come upon us." So, they cast lots or drew straws and Jonah drew the short straw. Jonah 1:7 (ESV)

Then the crew looks at Jonah and says, tell us what is up with you boy?
And they interrogated him,
What is your occupation?
Where do you come from?
What country are you from?
Who is your family, who are your parents?

And Jonah said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." Jonah 1:9 (ESV)

Well, that was it, the men grew more afraid and were like, what do we do with him?
They looked at Jonah and said, what do we do with you?
And Jonah said, throw me into the sea, but they didn't want his blood on their hands,

So, they tried to get back to land, but the storm was growing stronger and stronger – so, they threw Jonah overboard. ☹️

Into the raging sea & he sinks to the bottom of the sea!

How do I know he got to the bottom?

Jonah 2:5&6 (MSG) says

5 Ocean gripped me by the throat. The ancient Abyss grabbed me and held tight. My head was all tangled in seaweed 6“ at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land.”

That sounds like the bottom of the sea to me.

The fact that Jonah sank that deep and survived is a supernatural miracle its self.

– Jonah was thrown into the Mediterranean Sea which has an average depth of 1,500 M (4,900 ft), there are a few different types of fish/whales that live there and can easily survive at these depths.

Let me give you some perceptive on what that means regarding the amount of pressure your body would feel sinking to those depths...

According to the Dive and Discover website: <https://divediscover.whoi.edu/>

- At 1 meter, 3.2 feet deep- 60% of visible light is absorbed by clear seawater.
- Cloudy water would block even more sunlight cutting the visibility to almost zero.
- At 10 meters (approx. 7ft) pressure on your body would feel like 2 bowling balls stacked on your head.
- At 50 meters it would feel like 6 bowling balls stacked on your head.
- At 100 meters, 11 bowling balls stacked on your head.
- 1000 M (3,280.4 ft) your body would feel 1,490 Lbs/sq in. of pressure or 91 bowling balls stacked on top of your head!

Recall earlier, I said, the average depth of the Mediterranean Sea is about 1,500 M, there are some places even deeper, so assume Jonah went deeper, maybe 2,000 M (6561.68 ft) his body would feel approx.. 2,965 lbs/sq inch of crushing pressure or 1.5 Volkswagen Beetle Bugs stacked on top of his head.”

Again, the fact that Jonah sank that deep and survived is a supernatural miracle its self.

Jonah is in a bad, bad situation, and he is at the deepest, darkest troubled point you can imagine distressed and dying, what does he do Jonah 2:2, says “he cried!” ‘Help!’

“Cried” in Hebrew is shava (Shaw-vah) which means “to be free” it is used reflectively with the Hebrew word halloo (/hə'loo/) that translates as (for help, i.e. freedom from some trouble.)

When halloo (/hə'loo/), is expressed its meaning is “to shout,” “to cry out,” “to yell, bellow, or scream.”

Jonah’s prayer from the bottom of the sea was one word! HELP!!!

We have all been in a place where we have needed to be rescued!

So, God helped Jonah, by sending a fish to swallow him up, wait, really? Do you think Jonah might have said, “wait, my help is being swallowed by a fish?”

That is not what I was expecting.

How many times in your life have you cried to God for ‘Help!’ or cried to be Rescued and the help that comes is not what you expected, or thought it should be,

God says, “just like Jonah; I know what’s best for you; I know what needs to happen in the process to get you to focus on my plan for your life.” Even if it means finding yourself in the belly of a fish.

Amen!

Jonah’s story can feel distant to us, and when studying for this message it reminded me of another guy’s story, that is closer to home.

Illustration: Story of restitution:

In Jonah’s story, getting swallowed by a fish was not the end and, in the restitution story, God had bigger plans for both of us

Because we have all been in a place where we have needed to be rescued!

From these stories here are a few things that we can learn.

First thing is

- 1) God rescues us from the impossible.
 - a. Daniel in Lion’s den – Daniel 6:22, My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.” God shut the mouth of the impossible because rescues us from the impossible
 - b. Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed-nego, thrown into the fire pit! (Daniel 3) Because they would not bow and when the king came to the furnace, he saw 4 men and not 3 because God rescues us from the impossible!

- c. Jonah was drowning at the bottom of the ocean, much deeper than an average man can survive. But God sent a big fish to rescue him from the impossible.

Are you drowning in something bigger than you can handle? Deep down, do you wish God would rescue you? Have you been praying for God to save you from painful circumstances? Our God can rescue you from the impossible!

Here's the next thing –

2) God rescues the guilty

- a. Jonah was guilty, and he knew he was running from God
 - i. Jonah 1:10 - Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD because he had told them! (ESV)
- b. Guilty
- c. Facing up to 14 years, My God rescues even the guilty -
 - i. I did not understand the power of God's promises like I do today! Promises like:
 - ii. Is 43:2, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."

When Jonah ran from God and was thrown overboard and sank to the bottom of the sea when I was young and dumb, not concerned about a relationship with God, our stupid choices did not stop God from loving us! Our stupid decisions did not push God away!

But he did not just remove us from the process of getting us back on track. He showed up in the process to rescue us even when we were both guilty.

DL Moody said it like this:

"God's presence in the trial is much better than exemption from the trial.
The sympathy of His heart with us is sweeter far than the power of His hand for us."

- DL Moody

We pray, "O God! help me out of the trial" When God says your greatest blessing of my presences is in the trial"

The last thing we can glean from these 2 stories, lean in here:

3) God rescues for a purpose.

Jer. 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God starts every story with a purpose: He started your story with a purpose; we all have a purpose. No one is an accident, and no one is a mistake. Regardless of the number of times, we try to run from the plan of God, he will not and has not given up on you.

In Jonah's story even though he boarded a boat for the opposite direction, and ended up in the belly of a fish, God knew what it would take to get him back on track to Nineveh, and it's a good thing because when Jonah preached

"The people of Nineveh listened, and trusted God." Jonah 3:5
God rescues for a purpose.