

**03.09.14 Small Group Questions, Dale Oquist teaching
Incredible Jonah
Jonah 2 Part 2 "More Insights from an Insider"**

Getting Started

What has God been teaching you through the Jonah series thus far?

Looking Back

Great fish only mentioned two times in Jonah, but interesting similarities in other parts of Scripture

What would the first readers of Jonah have seen/heard when they heard Jonah?

- Hosea 8:1-3, 7-8 - Israel is "swallowed up"
- Jeremiah 51:34 - serpent = "sea monster"
- Psalm 124:1-5

Jonah should not be read apart from the whole of Scripture. It is the story of God's people...us - our disobedience and rebellion is represented in Jonah.

Jonah thinks he has been successful in running from God but God catches up to him in a dramatic fashion - in the belly of a great fish.

- *Has God ever used a dramatic means to "catch up" with you? Share about it.*

The circumstances of our lives:

- Jonah can only blame himself for his circumstances
- Daniel was the victim of circumstances, not responsible for them.
- Jonah's story or Daniel's story may be ours
- *Do you feel more like Jonah or Daniel, responsible for circumstances or a victim of circumstances? Explain.*

Jonah is out of options - this is his deathbed prayer; doesn't want to be separated from God

- When you run out of options, ideas, and strength, you fall on the best option - calling out to God
- "You may never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have." (Quote attributed to Corrie ten Boom)
- GOD LISTENS!
- In our darkest hour, we often assume God is far away, but Jonah assumes opposite...it was a great assumption.

Jonah 2:3 - "You hurled me into the deep" - Jonah means God, but it was actually the sailors who hurled him into the water

- Jonah recognizes God is in control...His fingerprints are all over what is happening
 - *How do you see God's fingerprints over the messes in your life?*

- Jonah is responsible for the mess that is his life, and so are we, but God is there in the middle of my mess.
- Some people think that once they are a Christian it will be smooth sailing; if that is your idea you will always be frustrated and you may have an atheistic lifestyle...for sure you will have a messed up idea of God's character.
- The transformation of our character is challenging.
- We are horrible captains of our own ships.
- When our parents restrict our movements and desires...we are ticked. Dale's parents were secure enough to let him hate them for a while. They knew what was best.
- Sometimes God will throw us overboard to change and transform our lives.
- **No life or choice you've made is beyond the redemption of God.**
 - *How does this truth encourage you?*

Jonah 2:4 - "I've been banished from your presence."

- Isn't that what you wanted, Jonah?! You were running from God!
- We think we have our best interest in mind so much that we believe our pursuits are better than God's plan for us.
- In this verse, Jonah is saying, "Oh no! I almost got what I wanted! Wouldn't have that been tragic?!"
- Isn't it a powerful moment when we realize the emptiness in all that we ourselves desire?!

Jonah 2:5-6

- Life can feel like there is no hope - we think the circumstances of our life will never get better...believe no change is coming.
- We move into despondency and faithlessness.
- **"BUT"** - moment of light in the darkness
 - The moment Jonah thinks it is all over (any breath could be his last), he remembered Yahweh
 - Act of praise - physically speaking out the name of God
 - Jonah's life wasn't flashing in front of him...God was.

Many of us think circumstances are an indicator as to how God feels about us; if circumstances are good, God loves me, but if they're bad, something must be wrong in our relationship with God.

- Circumstances are not a viable indicator of God's commitment.
 - *If you looked at your current circumstances as an indicator of how God feels about you, what would you determine?*
- ***The only indicator we need to determine if God is committed to us and loves us, is Jesus!**
 - *Knowing this truth, how can we change our perspective on our current circumstances?*

Acts 16 - Paul and Silas in prison praising/singing to God in darkest hour - starts earthquake.

- *Share about a time you chose to praise God in the midst of your darkest hour/terrible circumstances. What was the result?*
- When you feel like your strength is failing and you have no hope left, remember Yahweh and speak His name.

Close by reading through the lyrics of the song, "Praise the Lord", by Russ Taff

When you're up against a struggle, that shatters all your dreams
And your hopes have been cruelly crushed by Satan's manifested schemes
And you feel the urge within you to submit to earthly fear
Don't let the faith you're standing in seem to disappear

Praise the Lord, He will work through those who praise Him
Praise the Lord, for our God inhabits praise
Praise the Lord, for the chains that seem to bind you
Serve only to remind you, that they drop powerless behind you
When you praise Him

Now, Satan is a liar and he wants to make us think
That we are paupers, when he knows himself we're children of the King
So lift up the mighty shield of faith for the battle must be won
We know that Jesus Christ has risen and the work's already done

Praise the Lord, He will work through those who praise Him
Praise the Lord, for our God inhabits praise
Praise the Lord, for the chains that seem to bind you
Serve only to remind you, that they drop powerless behind you
When you praise Him

Praise the Lord, He will work through those who praise Him
Praise the Lord, for our God abides in our praise
Praise the Lord, for the chains that seem to bind you
Serve only to remind you, that they drop powerless behind you
When you praise Him

When you praise Him
When you praise Him
When you praise
When you praise, you praise the Lord

Praise the Lord

The only way to make sense of this life is through Jesus.

Moving Forward

Dale shared about 30 days to Easter, a study we will do together as a faith family, within

the context of our small group.

- *How do you think this all church study will deepen us as a faith family and prepare us for Easter?*
- *Who do you know who isn't in a small group, that you could invite to join us for 30 Days to Easter?*

How can we pray for you this week?