



God's Presence in Our Pain

Jonah 2:1-7 |

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SUMMARY

God's redemption of Jonah from beneath the waves and from inside whale is only part of the his deliverance. The real deliverance that God brings is inside Jonah. We may not know exactly what Jonah was thinking but we do know that he repented, and that the next time the Word of Yahweh cam to him, he obeyed.

True there was still much that was not-quite-right in Jonah. His obedience doesn't come without complaint. He is still full of little rebellions against God and his grace, but this is the great news of the gospel! God doesn't rescue Jonah because he has somehow gotten his attitude right. He rescues because he is gracious. As Exodus 34:6 says, Yahweh is "full of steadfast (hesed) love."

The gospel is the good news that God declares us right-with-himself even while we are still sinners. We are transformed by his grace but not immediately, not fully, not yet. We still sin. We are, as Martin Luther describes us, *simul justus et peccator* (sinners yet righteous). Jonah did not emerge from the belly of the fish fully changed. He'll need more and more breakthroughs in grace, and so do we. In fact, we need ongoing renovation of our hearts by God's grace applied by the Spirit of God.

GROUP QUESTIONS

- From the sermon, or your direct reading of Jonah 2:1-7, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you about how God leads Jonah internally back to himself?
- How would you describe both what Jonah discovered beneath the waves?
- Brennan Manning once famously wrote, "*When I get honest, I admit I am a bundle of paradoxes. I believe and I doubt, I hope and get discouraged, I love and I hate, I feel bad about feeling good, I feel guilty about not feeling guilty. I am trusting and suspicious. I am honest and I still play games. Aristotle said I am a rational animal; I say I am an angel with an incredible capacity for beer.*" How does Jonah reflect this paradox of character?
- Romans 8 tells us many things, but it concludes by telling us that nothing can separate us from God's love for us in Christ. Where in your life do you need that truth?
- If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of these portions of Scripture, what is that thing?