

FROM REBELLION TO REDEMPTION

AN EASTER PRIMER



Olivia Buddel

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. He said, "I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and LORD, you heard me! *Jonah 2:1-2*

Welcome

By Pastor Bob Davies

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Greetings,

Following Jesus implies direction. There are responsibilities for us to uphold, with places for us to go and things for us to do. Of course, all of that is inexorably tied to our growth in Christ; in 1 Corinthians 2, Paul writes that we have the mind of Christ, and we know in our own experience that that is something which grows over time. We learn to discern. We learn to understand. We learn to wait. And, indeed, we must learn to follow, trust, and obey.

The story of Jonah reverberates with these questions, calling us to consider ourselves and our obedience. But it goes deeper still, asking about our true alignment with God's heart. Indeed, the question for Jonah is not merely obediently going to Ninevah, nor merely faithfully speaking what he has been given to say. Beyond where we go and what we do is the question of whether we will love what and who God loves, embracing His divine concerns as our own.

Our missional life as a church, with inspired activity and the flourishing and flowering of Christ's love and blessings for others in Kanata, arises where we are indeed in alignment with

God's heart. He is concerned not merely with each of us, but with those around us. Will they hear God's voice, even spoken through you? Will they experience God's grace and love, even acted out by you? If he is concerned for a society of confusion, corrupted power, isolation, and sin, how could we walk by without concern?

As we set our hearts and minds towards Jesus' death and resurrection, it is our prayer that these reflections on Jonah challenge you. We have chosen a difficult path. As followers of Christ, we have died to ourselves and been

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*Will they hear
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given new life in Him, but that life is for His glory. God is doing many things in the world, and just like Jonah we are called to be part of it.

Thank you to the members of the KBC congregation for their prayerful contributions. May God bless you as you prepare for Easter.

Bob Davies
Pastoral Team Leader

Time-out

By Bev Sarafin

Parents often use a time-out when rebellious children refuse correction. The child may have to sit on a lonely chair; the bottom step of the stairs; or at the table, now vacated. Instructed to think about *the incident*, the rebel sits alone. There is no one to argue with. No one to hear the rebel's defense. No one to manipulate. The only way to freedom is through admitting the truth and obeying the parent.

Have you ever known a divine time-out? I have. Thankfully, mine did not involve a creature from the deep.

Imagine Jonah sitting in the dark for three days and nights, remembering and worrying. Was he shocked that God put him inside the creature? Was Jonah confused? Was he angry? Did he wrestle with God? Did he hope God would save him, yet worry He would not? How did Jonah come to believe enough in God's mercy that he cried out?

Have you struggled against God, doubting His goodness and thinking Him unjust? Have you been confused, comparing what you believe with what happened? Consider Jonah. He fled from God. God met him in the storm. He was drowning. God gave him air. He cried for deliverance. God released him. He surrendered. God put him on the right path.

Like Jonah, I created my own distress; but God redeemed me. He will do that for you. Whatever you are fleeing; angry about; or afraid of — stop.

God waits to forgive; to rescue; and make your path straight. Ask Him.

“... I called out of my distress to the LORD,
And He answered me....”

Jonah 2: 2

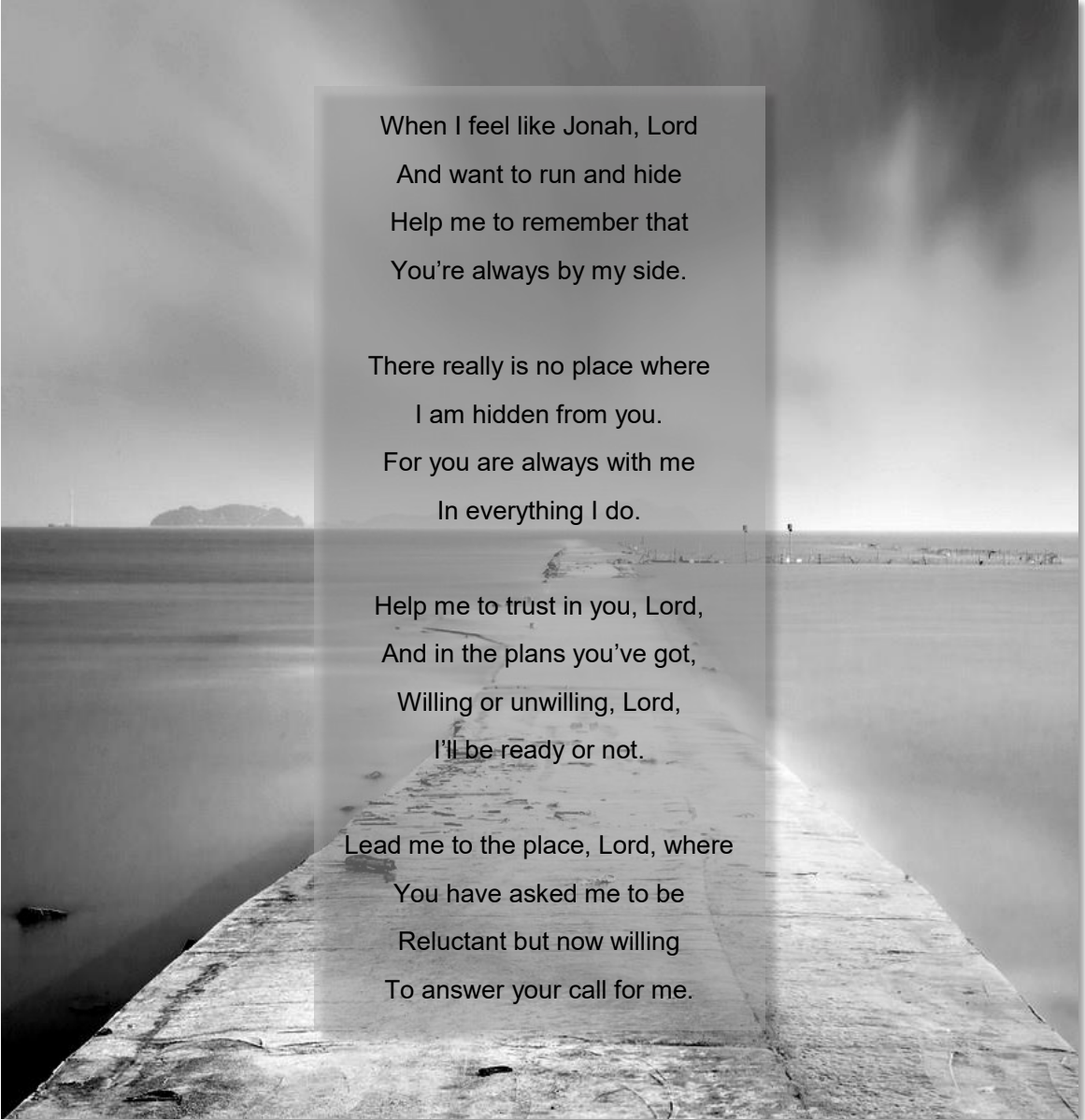


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When I Feel Like Jonah

By Jenny Burr



When I feel like Jonah, Lord
And want to run and hide
Help me to remember that
You're always by my side.

There really is no place where
I am hidden from you.
For you are always with me
In everything I do.

Help me to trust in you, Lord,
And in the plans you've got,
Willing or unwilling, Lord,
I'll be ready or not.

Lead me to the place, Lord, where
You have asked me to be
Reluctant but now willing
To answer your call for me.

Stuck In The Deep and The Dark

By Pastor Stephen Budd

Have you ever been stuck? Maybe in your car during a storm, maybe waiting what seems like an eternity at the airport held captive by a flight cancelation or delay, or perhaps you've had the joy of losing your boot deep down in the muck. Safe to say that we've all been there at one time or another, hapless, helpless, and hopelessly stuck. Getting stuck can feel incredibly debilitating and downright disheartening.

As Jonah was thrown overboard, I can't imagine he ever dreamt that this was where he would end up. Just a short while before, he dozed off to sleep in the bottom of the boat, and now he was flying through the air, barreling toward the sea. His plan was to get as far away from Nineveh as he could. He was heading some 5000 km in the opposite direction to where God wanted him to go, which was east, to the Assyrian city of Nineveh. Nope, Jonah was instead headed west for Tarshish in Spain. "Tarshish or bust!" is how Jonah begins, but what Jonah did not know yet that his journey would take him from the belly of the boat, to the belly of a great fish. From sleep to the deep for Jonah. This Jonah is stuck in the deep and the dark.

We can all be a like Jonah in life. Stuck with

what appears to be no way out, no way through, no course of action, we can be hapless, helpless, and hopelessly stuck. It could be a relationship, a medical diagnosis, it could be a past hurt or trauma from our childhood. It could be that life hasn't turned out the way we thought it should have. We've experienced being passed over, overlooked, everything looked great yesterday but today has brought a world of surprise, and none of it good. Like Jonah we find ourselves in the belly of the deep and the dark.

A couple things we need to see while we are with Jonah in the dark. First, this is of Jonah's making. The trip, the distance, the storm, the deep, these are all because Jonah didn't



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simply trust God and follow God's direction. We too will make decisions and choices that aren't always in line with God's priorities for our lives. Like Jonah we can travel a long way

in the wrong direction and just like Jonah we can end up in the deep, in the dark. For Jonah it was inside a great fish. Second, God never abandoned Jonah; even when things seem hapless, helpless, and hopeless God makes a way. He heard Jonah's cry and delivered him to the shore. What seemed life ending became the means of his rescue. Certainly an experience that Jonah would

never forget! Even in the deep and the dark God knows, He hears, and He will see you through. You can trust Him even in the depths of the darkness...Jonah 2:2 "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry."

Lift Your Eyes to God

By Amelia Budd

별을 보려면 고개를 들어야 한다
Byeol-eul bo-ryeo-myeon go-
gae-reul deul-eo-ya han-da

"To see the stars, you have to lift your head"

For the past 3 years, I have been studying Korean; both as a hobby and in university. I have always found the language fascinating, but the thing I appreciate the most about Korean is the poetic nature of the language. In my studies, I have not only been challenged at times, but I have also wondered what direction this will take me in life.

Have you ever wondered if you're doing the right thing? Chances are, you have had just that thought at one point. Everyone, Christians included, will have the experience of wondering if they're on the right path in life, fulfilling their life's purpose.

When we ask ourselves these important questions, we can find ourselves in the same boat as Jonah. Just like Jonah, we can find ourselves headed in the wrong direction in life, wandering aimlessly because we have been looking at the wrong things. Losing sight of what is most important. We can forget to look up. Some people project their own hopes, desires, fears, and prejudices onto what they think is God's plan for their life. In some cases like Jonah, we know what God is asking, but choose to avoid it or run away from it. We choose to look down. These ways of living are destructive to our well-being and are not what God has called us to be. We can see that as an example through the life of Jonah. When Jonah receives a word from God, instead of

obeying, he tries to run away and avoid God's instruction. Instead of Nineveh in the east, Jonah heads for Tarshish in the West. But God still reroutes Jonah's plans by having him swallowed by a fish!

Jonah is taken down to the depths, and there isn't a star in sight. For three days he sits in cold, damp, pitch black. Until finally, in the midst of all the darkness, he lifts his eyes to God. In the belly of the fish, Jonah cries out to the Lord, "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry" (Jonah 2:1-2). And God answers; he brings Jonah back to dry land and reveals the stars again.

As a university student, it has been an adjustment to get into the healthy rhythms of student life while still being a Christian and involved in the community. This has led to many nights worrying at the end of the day. "Did I study enough?", "Did I remember to finish my work?", there must be something...? Getting wrapped up in the hustle and bustle of work and school, it can be so easy to forget about what matters the

most as Christians; to strive to love God and others. One of the ways that we can do that and receive His guidance is to look up to Him. Jonah needed to look up to God, and we do too.

"To see the stars, you have to lift your head". This is a great reminder from God that to see the good that He has in store, you need to look up to Him for guidance. There is nothing that you can do to ruin or destroy your chances at a beautiful life because God sent his Son to be victorious over it all. The same one that died for me and my sins, died for you too.

Jesus came for a reason, He died for a reason, and God made you for a reason. You have a purpose that is beautiful and meaningful in the eyes of the Lord, you just need to look up to see it.

"Lift up your eyes and see. Who has made these stars? It is the One Who leads them out by number. He calls them all by name. Because of the greatness of His strength, and because He is strong in power, not one of them is missing." – Isaiah 40:26



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your head.*

A Prayer From Inside The Fish

By Derek Smith

You are a gracious and compassionate God.
You are slow to anger abounding in love,
A God who relents from sending calamity.

Yet, when you tell me to go north,
I go south.

Yet, when you tell me to speak,
I remain silent.

Yet, when you tell me to love,
I hold my heart close to myself.

Lord, I thank you that you never leave me,
regardless of where I am physically.

Lord, I thank you that you always hear me,
regardless of where I am spiritually.

Lord, I thank you that you always desire Your Glory and my good,
regardless of where I am mentally.

Help me learn to obey you more.
Help me learn to follow you more.
Help me learn to love you more.

Make me one who is gracious and compassionate.
Make me one who is slow to anger and quick to forgive.
Make me one who brings peace and healing and not calamity.

Your Will

by Jordan Hay

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

Jonah did not like what God was asking him to do. God was planning to rescue the Ninevites. The Ninevites were Assyrians, the mortal and genealogical enemies of Jonah and the Israelites. But, God in his great compassion looked at the Ninevites and said, "I will rescue the Ninevites. I will send my prophet to preach repentance to them and rescue them from certain destruction." Unfortunately for Jonah... he was God's chosen prophet. He must preach repentance to the Ninevites, but there was absolutely no way Jonah was going to go to Nineveh because Jonah did not like what God was asking him to do.

Oftentimes, I feel like Jonah. I do not like or

understand what God is doing and I try to get out of what God is asking me to do.

God, why did you put these people in my family? They are so hard to love.

God, why did you give me these co-workers and these life circumstances? They are so difficult.

God, why does following Jesus seem so hard? Other people get ahead by lying, stealing, and cheating.

God why are you asking me to do this? I don't understand what you are doing!

There was a time when even Jesus asked similar questions about God and his actions. During Lent we remember the humanity of Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane, before he was crucified, Jesus said, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39). Jesus knew what was coming, and asked



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A test of Christian maturity is how you respond when you don't understand what God is doing.

God if there was any other way to rescue the world. But the only way to redeem humanity was through the cross.

Jesus shows us how to cry to God in our distress, how to listen for God's voice, and how to resign ourselves to God's will. As Christians we are learning to pray like Jesus. In our Lord's famous prayer it says, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven."

It is so easy to pray these words, but how hard they are to do!

A test of Christian maturity is how you respond when you don't understand what God is doing. Doubts, fears, and life circumstances that just don't go the way you want – these things can overwhelm us, or by faith they can bring us closer to God.

How will you respond when obeying God means doing things you don't want to do? Like forgiving that person, or apologizing, or admitting you were wrong, or reading the Bible, or fasting, or memorizing scripture.

What happens when obeying God's will means you must go preach to the Ninevites?

What happens when obeying God's will means picking up a cross and carrying it to your death? For Jesus and all of his followers that is what Easter is all about. Christians are now picking up their own crosses and following after Jesus to their death.

Lord, help me to be patient when I can't understand what you are doing.

Like Jonah, help me to cry to you in my distress.

Like Jesus, help me to know your will here on Earth.

Most of all Lord let not my will be done on Earth, but let your will be done.



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*...let not my will be done
on Earth, but let your will
be done.*

Mercy in the Darkness

By Carol Beck



Even a prophet of God
Does not wish to see “Go and speak My judgement on the
cruellest of enemies”
On his “To Do List”.
Stark upon the page, straight from the mouth of God.

So pack your bag and run away
Even though you know,
God knows
Exactly where to find you.
Avoiding God’s call,
Asleep deep in the belly of a ship.

No plan of God will be so foolishly thwarted
By a rebel of humanity
Who wants to keep God’s mercy for himself.

God hurls great winds upon the sea.
Your folly found out, those men with other gods,
Reluctantly toss you into tempestuous waves.
Their calm is given, but you
Gasping, twisted in seaweed, find the ‘roots of the
mountains’.

Then like an uber ride
God’s appointed fish shows up,
As you, sinking, sinking, rescued be.
Rescued be?
“Spend three days and nights in the stinking belly of a big
fish”
Said no one’s bucket list. Ever.

In sloshing darkness, fishbones jab you in the ribs
Awakening the memory of the Creator of the heavens, the
earth and the sea.





A whisper from your lips – a call for mercy. God has an ear
for desperate whispers.

I do not see you tidy and composed, kneeling in the belly.
Dry, with dignity intact, like flannelgraph Jonah.
Nor a singing asparagus composing catchy lyrics.
But limp.
Submerged in a sloppy mess of rebellion.
For all intent and purposes, gone.
When God, for His purposes, brings you back.

No plan of God will be thwarted
When a rebel of humanity turns to God asking mercy for
himself.

Raised from your watery grave at the command of our
Creator
Deep darkness delivers you to life
To complete the plan, as God ordained.
Rebellious outbursts to the end.
This God of Jonah's, eternally the same
He calls our name.

Some things **this** story makes me meditate on:

Who has God asked me to show His mercy to?
What request from God am I rebelling against?
What seas are stormy because of my rebellion?
What dark bellies has God provided, where I have been
awakened, to call out for mercy, not just for mercy's
sake, but to fulfill His purposes?



Jonah to Jesus

By Pastor Stephen Budd

The story of Jonah is one of the most captivating in Scripture. In Jonah we have a story of rebellion, redemption, and grace as we journey with Jonah, swallowed by a great fish after attempting to flee God's calling on his life.

His time in the fish's belly, three days and three nights, holds great

significance as it points us to Jesus, to His death, burial, and resurrection. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus Himself refers to Jonah's time in the fish and His own journey to the cross, saying, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." In Jesus' own words, Jonah's experience foreshadows the pivotal events of the Easter story.

First, Jonah's descent into the belly of the great fish is a picture of death. When Jonah was cast into the sea and

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Jonah 2:1-2

swallowed by the fish, it represented a kind of death. In Jonah 2:2, he prays, saying, "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help." Jonah's experience

mirrors the hopelessness and darkness that surrounds death.

Similarly, Jesus faced

death on the cross. He descended into the depths of despair and darkness for three days, experiencing the separation from God that came with bearing the weight of humanity's sin. Just as Jonah sank into the depths, so too did Jesus take on the depths of human suffering and death.

Second, not only is Jonah's decent a picture of death, but his time in the great fish is a picture of burial. For three days and nights, Jonah was trapped inside the fish, unable to escape. This is such a great picture of burial. Jonah was hidden in the belly of the fish, in essence he was buried deep

down in the dark. Jesus, too, was buried for three days, His body sealed in a tomb. Jonah's time in the fish was a moment of reflection and transformation, where he prayed and turned his heart back to God. Jesus' burial, though it seemed like a time of defeat, was a moment of divine preparation for the glorious resurrection to come.

Third, which happens to be on the third day, Jonah was vomited onto dry land, a miraculous rescue. Jonah was "resurrected" as it were from the dead. Jonah's emerging from the fish symbolizes new life and a renewed direction to fulfill God's mission. Jesus' resurrection on the third day was the ultimate victory over death, bringing new life

to all who believe in Him. Jesus didn't remain in the grave; He rose, conquering sin and death, offering eternal life to those who trust in Him.

Jonah's story in the end is a profound picture of Jesus as Jonah's experience points us directly to Jesus' work on the cross. Just as Jonah was saved from the depths of the grave, we too are saved through Jesus' sacrifice for us. May we, like Jonah turn to the Lord in repentance and trust in Him. Only God could do such a marvelous thing! While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Despite our rebellion, we find redemption at the cross.



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