

The Book of Jonah

Jonah 2:4-10

Devotion

- **Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
- **Small Catechism:** What does such baptizing with water signify? Where is this written?
- **Hymn:** God's Own Child I Gladly Say It (LSB 594)

Chapter 2:4-10

Read Chapter 2:1-10

Review Previous Class

- See worksheet

Verse 4

“I am driven away” – נִגְרַשְׁתִּי

- The verb here indicates a severance of an existing relationship.
- Examples:
 - Yahweh “drove out” Adam and Eve from the garden (Gen. 3:24).
 - Can said to Yahweh, “You have driven me away” from the cultivated land (Gen. 4:14).
 - Sarah urged Abraham to expel Hagar and her son Ishmael (Gen 21:10).
- Jonah had ran away from the “face of the LORD,” the “presence of the LORD.” Therefore, Yahweh had driven away, cast away Jonah from His sight.

- To be driven away/separate from God, is to be removed from all of God’s favor and blessings – forgiveness and eternal life. You are handed over to death.
- Luther states:
 - At this point Jonah thought he was done for both in body and soul. It is as if he were saying: “All these things that You were doing to me were driving me to despair. Terrified by these signs of Your wrath I saw nothing except that I was done for, that I was hurled forth from Your presence.”¹

“Yet I shall again look upon your holy temple” - אֶד אֲוֹסְרִי לְהִבִּיט אֶל־הַיְכָל קִדְשְׁךָ

- Here, we see a complete reversal.
- Jonah was driven away from sight of the LORD, but now he speaks of “looking upon” the temple.
- The temple is the opposite of Sheol.
- The temple is the place where God dwells.
- This is a turn from death (Sheol), to life (the temple).
- Jonah turns his prayer towards this dwelling place of God.
- The place God promised to reside in grace, to hear prayer, and to answer it.
- In the fullness of time, God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of all his promises (2 Cor. 1:20).
 - As God’s dwelling place with us (Immanuel), Christ is the new temple (John 2:21).
 - Through Christ we have access to the throne of grace (Rom 5:2).
 - Indeed, all prayers are to be directed to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ, because no one can come to the Father except through the Son (John 14:6).

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 19: Minor Prophets II: Jonah and Habakkuk*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 19 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 18.

Verse 5

“surrounded, encompass” – אֶפְסָוּנִי

- This word is used to convey distressing situation.
- The waters were covering/encompassing him to take his life.

“the deep surrounded me...” - תְּהוֹם יְסָבְבֵנִי

- This is usually associated with vast water, but has richer meaning.
 - This word brings to mind the primeval ocean/flood that existed near the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:2).
 - It sometimes refers explicitly to the depths of the sea or ocean (Ps. 135:6).
 - It connotes death and destruction (Gen 7:11).
 - It can convey the idea of an extreme or distant place (Job 38:16)

“At the roots of the mountains”

- Jonah is at his lowest point.
- Think Hawaii.
 - Where are the roots of the mountains? The bottom, the lowest part of the ocean.
- Jonah continued to descend to the point where he couldn't descend further.

Verse 6

- Verse 6 is the key verse of not only the prayer, but of the entire book.
- The words of verse 6 are at the center of the entire book both:
 - From a structure standpoint:
 - There are an equal number of verses on both sides of this verse.
 - And from a theological standpoint:

- Dying and rising. Death and resurrection.
 - Jonah went down. Yet, God brought up!
 - Jonah:
 - His turning from the face of God.
 - His lack of trust.
 - His downward spiral into death is on him.
 - Yet, Yahweh:
 - Brought up from death.
 - He brings new life.
 - He is the one doing the rising from the pit of death.
- Question:
 - So, how much does Jonah contribute in salvation?
 - How much do we contribute in salvation?
 - Answer: None!
 - We're depended on God, upon Christ who:
 - was lifted up on the cross to suffer God's wrath for sin.
 - Who was in the tomb three days.
 - Who was raise for our justification.
 - Christ is the one who brings up our lives from the pit of death.
- Is it not a surprise that the prophet Jesus identifies with is Jonah?
 - At the heart and center of Christ's work is his dying and rising.
 - At the heart and center of this book is Jonah speaking of dying and rising.
 - This is the center of our Christian faith!
 - "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by

the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4).

- We daily die and rise. Small Catechism:
 - *What does such baptizing with water signify?*
 - Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Verse 7

- Verse 7 begins the ascent of Jonah. Because of Yahweh, he’s moving up from the pit.

“When my life was fainting away, I remembered...”

- Why does Jonah only remember Yahweh when his life was fainting away and not earlier?
- Like all OT and NT believers, Jonah is simultaneous saint and sinner.
- Sometimes his faith is weak or not evident at all.
- Other times it shines forth
- Like every Christian, he’s inconsistent. Yet, He’s saved by the LORD who alone who’s steadfast love endures forever.

“...my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.”

- Again, another reference to the dwelling place of Yahweh.
- The place God promised to reside in grace, to hear prayer, and to answer it.

Verse 8

“Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.”

- This sends us back to the pagan sailors in chapter 1, prior to their conversion.
- This sends us forward to the godless Ninevites in chapter 3.
- Idols are regarded as vanity, emptiness, nothingness.
- To worship idols is worthless – unable to keep their promises and unable to act and save their worshipers.
- In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon comments on Jonah 2:8: “Every confidence is futile except a confidence in mercy. Mercy preserves us; our own merits and our own efforts do not preserve us.”²
- The irony in these words of Jonah made himself an idol.
 - His unwillingness to help the sailors and his disregard for the salvation of the citizens of Nineveh, Jonah has made himself an idol.
- Yet, it verse 9 reveals that God has brought him to the realization of his sins.

Verse 9

“...With the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay.”

- Where have we heard this language before? The repentant sailors.
- The sailors made sacrifices and vows and prayers to God after running after vain idols.
- Jonah is now offering sacrifices and vows and prayers to Yahweh after making himself into an idol.
- Jonah’s learned a thing or two.
- He’s copying what occurred on the ship.
- In a way, he’s confessing that the sailors finally got it right.
- Again, Jonah is finally behaving like a prophet.

² Ap IV, between 179 and 183 in the octavo edition.

“Salvation belongs to the LORD.”

- This express a fundamental idea that is seen throughout the entire book that the LORD saves.
- Yahweh saves the sailors by bringing them to faith through the testimony of his reluctant prophet.
- Yahweh saves Jonah – he is rescued from Sheol and brought to repentance and faith.
- Yahweh will save the Ninevites in Chapter 3 through repentance and faith (more on that next time).
- This phrase is a fitting conclusion to his prayer as he is released from the great fish.
- The question is, what will He do with this renewed faith?
 - Will he preach this to all people, even those who are his enemies?

Verse 10

“And the LORD spoke to the fish...”

- We see the power of God’s word.
- He speaks! Just like at creation.
- The Lord’s word controls all things in the heavens and the earth.
- The Lord’s Word will be spoken to the Ninevites and continues to speaks to us today.

“...and it vomited Jonah out...”

- Jonah’s deliverance is finally complete as he’s vomited out of the fish.
- The instrument of death, the fish, is literally sick to its stomach.
- It can’t hold Jonah any longer.

- This is how our Lord deals with death.
- He makes it sick to its stomach so it can no longer hold His chosen one, Jesus Christ.

- Death couldn't contain His only begotten Son.
- This is God's promise to you, His chosen ones. Those who have been baptized into His death.
- Through Christ's death and resurrection, death has lost its sting. The grave will not be able to hold you.
- One day, you'll be vomited out of the grave.
- On the last day, you will be raised to live with our LORD and all the saints for all eternity, body and soul reunited.
- "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:54-55).

Final Thoughts / Questions

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, grant that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, may be renewed by Your Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.