

Turning Back to God
Jonah 1:17-2:10

“Out of mercy the Lord allowed Jonah to get to the point of fainting..., when his life was ebbing away and he was about to lose consciousness, so that the prophet could desire Him more than life itself... He finds us, and we search for Him because He has already found us. He brings us to the place where we admit we have no other hope but Him and no possibility of making it through a self-imposed major crisis unless He intervenes. He allows us to discover the gift of the darkness, death to self-willingness, before He resurrects us out of our tomb. God did not heal Jonah’s spiritual sickness before the prophet realized how sick he was.” Ogilvie

- I. The subject of vs. 17 is not the great fish but the Lord and what he did to get Jonah back on His path of righteousness. God intervened in the life of His child in a miraculous way to save him from the devastating consequences of his sin. The story of Jonah is meant to give us a deeper understanding of God’s sovereign control over all that He has created. It also teaches us that mankind cannot in any way thwart His sovereign will. Equally important is the understanding we gain of what His mercy is like to a repentant sinner who deserves nothing more than His justice. He loved Jonah as He does us, which means that God was not about to give up on him.

Jonah 1:17

Psalm 103:10 *He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*

- II. God's intervention in Jonah's life came when he was brought to a point of brokenness. God made sure that Jonah felt completely helpless without Him so that he would turn to Him to receive grace and mercy in his time of need. In his brokenness, Jonah cried out to the Lord to deliver him from the hell that he had made for himself. Jonah knew God, and he knew that He is a merciful and gracious God who does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. He knew that he could cry out to Him despite his sin and that God would forgive him. Jonah understood God's character, and it made all the difference in the world to him knowing that he could turn to the Lord and that He would listen.

Jonah 2:1-2
Heb. 4:14-16
Ps. 103:8-14

לִיץ שֶׁ'ֹּוּל, sheh-ole' = grave, hell, pit

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

- III. Jonah knew that God had disciplined him for his own good (Heb. 12:5-6). He knew that the Lord brought him to the point of no escape and instead of getting more rebellious, he surrendered his will to God with gratitude. He realized that his attitude was a worthless idol that he had created and worshipped more than God himself. He also realized that the result of clinging to the worthless deceit of an idol forfeited the working of God's **hesed** in his life. He understood that God was teaching him the value of mercy, which moved him to re-dedicate his life to serving the Lord no matter what He asked. True repentance always liberates bringing spiritual renewal and an excitement for the will of God.

Jonah 2:3-10
Ps. 51:1-10

תּוֹן הֶסֶד = goodness, kindness, faithfulness, (loving-) kindness

"An idol is anything that takes the place of God. So Jonah is saying that whenever a believer puts something else in the place of God and thereby turns from him, he inevitably also turns from God's mercy. God is not less merciful, but the believer has rejected that mercy and therefore deserves all that comes on him." Boice