

**Please turn with me in your copies of God's Word to Jonah chapter 1. So far we have come to see the judgement of the Lord upon this great prophet who had fled from His presence. When we left off last time we were there with Jonah and these mariners on the deck of this ship which was being tossed about by the wind and waves of God's righteous fury against Jonah. The lot has fallen upon him, and now there is no denying this great tempest is a result of his great sin. Our text this morning shows how both Jonah and these sailors respond to this knowledge. Let us now turn our attention to the reading of God's Word from Jonah chapter 1 beginning at verse 11.**

**\*Read Jonah 1:11-16\***

**\*Pray\***

**I've said before during this sermon series that we are no so different from Jonah. Oftentimes we find ourselves running from the face of Jehovah, fleeing His calling upon our lives, and making every effort we can to make our flight a success. But as we saw last time the Lord cannot be fled from. There is nowhere in all of creation in which you can hide from the presence of the Lord. Adam realized this when he sought to hide himself from the Lord walking in the cool of the day. And Jonah found this out when he boarded that ship destined for Tarshish but the Lord hurled this great tempest upon the sea to cause his plans to fail. When will we learn this lesson ourselves? When will you stop fleeing from the presence of the Lord and submit yourselves to His holy will? We saw in the previous verses that no matter what Jonah did his sin would find him out. He fled, he slept, he kept silent, and the Lord would not let his sins remain in the shadows. Through divine intervention the lot fell on Jonah. There was nowhere else to run. There was nowhere else to hide. His sin had finally found him out. And just as with Jonah, dear friend, you can be assured that whatever it is that is causing your to run from the face of God, whatever sin you are hiding in the dark crevasses of your heart, will one day be brought into the light and you will be able to hide no more. How will you**

**respond when that day comes? Will you be as your first parents who made excuses and sought to blame everyone else for their own sins? Will you be as that son of perdition Judas who was overwhelmed with guilt and took his own life? Or will you be like Jonah here, where we see a man come face to face with his sins and he owns them and bears forth the true fruit of repentance? This afternoon we come to take up the theme seen in this great example of true repentance exemplified. We'll consider this theme under three heads: first, sacrificial repentance; next, humble pleading; and finally, sincere submission.**

**Let us first consider the example of sacrificial repentance. When Jonah confessed his sins unto God and these sailors the men were terribly afraid, for they knew what a great sin had been committed against the great and power God. And so we see this interaction between the sailors and Jonah, "Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." These sailors ask Jonah what should be done to him. They knew that the Lord was angry with Jonah and that the storm was for his sake. They knew that something had to be done in order to cause the seas to calm, for it was not simply the confession of Jonah that stayed the righteous hand of God's fury. We read that "the sea wrought, and was tempestuous." The simple uttering of acknowledgment of sin and paying lip service to repentance was not enough for Jonah to be redeemed from the storm which raged. These sailors knew something more must take place. Something must be done to appease the anger of Jehovah. But they dare not take it upon themselves to do anything rashly. They spared this man of God for the time being because they acknowledged that among his people the true God was worshipped, the supreme King of heaven and earth. And, without a doubt, it was this fear that restrained them from throwing Jonah immediately into the sea. They knew what a great a terrible thing it is to raise a hand against**

**the Lord's anointed, and they dared not do that without first consulting the man of God what should be done.**

**And Jonah's response is the fruit of true repentance. Yes, he confessed his sins, but without bearing the fruit mete of repentance, it is but vain uttering from the mouth of a hypocrite. "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." Calvin writes, "Here Jonah not only declares that God would be pacified by his death, because the lot had fallen upon him, but he also acknowledges that his death would suffice as an expiation, so that the tempest would subside." Sin requires atonement. Sin requires sacrifice. Sin requires repentance. And sin requires obedience. Jonah was not the true sacrifice which brought about the redemption of his sins. Jonah was not the true sacrifice with stayed the hand of God's righteous anger. But Jonah was that symbolic sacrifice that was required in this moment. Here we see Jonah willingly offering himself up unto death in order to bring about a temporal salvation of those on the ship. It is as though Jonah is a type of Christ here in this act, for just as Jonah offered himself to be destroyed to bring about temporal salvation to undeserving sinner, so too did the greater Jonah offer Himself up willingly to be destroyed to bring about the eternal salvation of all undeserving sinners who put their trust in Him. While there is a greater sign of Jonah which points us to Christ that is yet to come, do not overlook what the actions of this man speak concerning the act of redemption that is found in Christ.**

**And what a beautiful picture of repentance we have in this great act of Jonah. He was willing to do whatever it took to bear forth the fruit that was necessary, to show forth his repentance in a real way, no matter the cost, even to his own hurt. How often to we only pay lip service to repentance and yet neglect to actually bear the fruit of that repentance. Jonah owned his sin; he did not blame anyone else, for there truly was no one else to blame. He owned his sin even to his own demise. Friends, if you take upon yourself the**

**blame for your sin, not seeking to shift it onto another, and own your sin as Jonah does here, there cannot be any murmur against God. Whatever is required of you must be done. This is true repentance, when you acknowledge God, and willingly testify before men that He is just, though, according to the judgment of your flesh, He may deal violently with you. Sometimes the fruit of repentance is simple; sometimes it is incredibly difficult; and sometimes it may even lead to your demise. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to bear forth the fruit of true repentance? Are you willing to say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It is the humility, the submission, found in Jonah's act of repentance that must be shown in your life as well. Will you prostrate yourself before the Lord? Will you willingly admit your sin and own it, not making excuses or shifting the blame? Will you submit to the Lord in whatever chastening He may send your way, and bear that in an act of true repentance? Will you be as Jonah?**

**This repentance is what the Lord required of this prophet. His sins must be reconciled. He must accept the fate that awaits him. And yet these mariners were not so quick to accept that as the only way. Let us look now at the example of humble pleading, "Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." These men tried everything they could to find another way. They understood what it meant to take the life of this man, especially knowing that he was a man of God. And so they rowed. They rowed and they rowed, but they could make any headways because the more they rowed the more the sea raged. Whether they were trying to row their way out of the storm or they were trying to make their way closer to land in order to give Jonah a greater chance of survival, our text does not say. But it seems that after all they had done, after their attempts to break through the storm, their casting away all the wares of the ship in order to make**

**it lighters, this was their last ditch effort. But it quickly became clear that no matter what they did, no matter how much of the wares they tossed overboard, the ship was stuck in this storm by a divine hand, and the ship was all the more heavy with the weight of Jonah's guilt. They had no other options.**

**And so we see them crying out to the Lord. Where earlier each man was crying out to his own god to save them, now we see that they realize only the Lord is the bringer of salvation. And so they cry out, not to their false gods, but to Jehovah, God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Oh how the hearts of men are softened by the tempests of this life. Here we see these pagans, mariners of the open seas, utterly humbled before the presence of almighty God. They are terrified, for they know the power of this great God. They have witnessed it firsthand. And they knew that what must be done was something which could cause the Lord to turn His wrath upon them. They knew they had to obey the prophet of God and throw him overboard into the sea. What a weighty burden these sailors had to bear. And so they humbly plead with the Lord to show them mercy, "We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." How the law of God which was inscribed on their hearts and put on display through creation pricked their consciences at the thought of shedding this man's blood. They knew from natural law what God had given through special revelation in Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." They knew that if they unjustly killed this man that his blood would be on their hands. They knew, even more so, that because he was a prophet of the Lord that the bloodguilt would be even greater. And so they cried out to the Lord for mercy. Do not let his blood be on our hands, they cried. This is your will, oh Lord.**

**They humbly plead with the Lord for mercy, that He would stay His hand of vengeance from them for what must take place.**

**They understood the weight of their actions, and they trusted in God to do what is right and just. They knew that the will of God is right and just, and that whatever God has decreed is beyond doubt just. You may never be found in a situation similar to these sailors. You will never be found in a situation exactly like theirs. But, dear friends, you must understand that while the blood of this prophet is not on your hands, the blood of that greater Prophet is. It was your sins that drove the nailed into His hands and feet. It was your sins that He bore upon His shoulders as He died that cursed death, hanging on a tree. If you are in Christ, though, that bloodguilt has been washed away. The Lord no longer against you counts iniquity. But if you are outside of Christ, then the bloodguilt of every sin you have committed against the Lord of all creation is laid upon you, and He will find you guilty and hold you to account. There is respite to be found for those who humble themselves before the Lord, but there is only damnation for those who haughtily turn up their nose to the King of kings. You must humble yourselves today, just as these sailors did. There is mercy to be found in Him. “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:6-7)**

**With all of these things now before both Jonah and these sailors there is only one thing left to do. While the responsibility laid before them we are given this great example of sincere submission. “So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.” These men made quite possibly the most difficult decision of their lives, they submitted to the will of the Lord and threw this man overboard. There was no knowledge of what would happen to Jonah from here. These men, in casting him overboard, were carrying out the role of executioner in this trial of the Lord’s prophet. He had been found**

guilty, both by the lot which has fallen to him and by his own admission and confession of sin, and here they were executing this man for his crimes against the God of the universe. And thus was the death of Jonah, at least as far as these men knew. No one could have survived being tossed into the sea, especially one as tempestuous as this one. There must have been some doubt in the hearts of some of these sailors as they laid hands on Jonah to cast him into the sea. What if they were wrong? What if this wasn't what the Lord required? But they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. And immediately they got their answer. "So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging." Still. Calm. Quiet. Tranquility. After Jonah had been thrown into the sea there was a sudden and unmistakable change. They knew without a shadow of a doubt that Jonah was the cause for the raging sea, that he was the reason they had come so close to shipwreck and death itself. Now they knew that every word which proceeded from the mouth of this prophet was true. He was a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord, the Lord He is God.

And so we something which at the beginning would have seemed utterly impossible. The once wicked pagan sailors began to worship the one living and true God. "Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows." They feared the Lord, not in the same way that they were afraid before, but this time in sincere submission to Him. They worshipped Him, honored Him, revered Him. The prophet who had fled from the presence of the Lord, running from His call to go unto the pagans and proclaim the Word of God because he knew that God would be merciful, unknowingly set himself on a course which would lead to the repentance of even more people. These men, having seen the glory of the Lord on display, responded in the only way one can, through sincere submission to Him. They worshipped this God, whom just a short time before had not known, and they worshipped with joy for they had seen the nature of God before their very eyes, His justice and His mercy. And so they offered a sacrifice unto the Lord. Perhaps they turned the ship back and went

**to Israel to offer sacrifice as the Lord requires; perhaps they offered whatever they had on that ship as a sacrifice unto Him; or perhaps it was simply the praise of their lips that was their sacrifice unto Jehovah as the Apostle speaks of in Hebrews. We will never know. But what we do know is that there appears to be a change in these men. And so they made vows unto God. Calvin comments, “When, therefore the sailors vowed a vow to God, they renounced their own idols. They cried before to their gods; but now they understand that they had cried in vain, and without any benefit, as they had to no purpose uttered their cries in the air. Now then they made their vows to the only true God; for they knew that their lives were in his hand.”**

**It’s impossible to say whether or not every one of these sailors was truly converted on that day. But what we are given is their actions, which give us reason for great hope that in glory we will see these brave men who submitted unto the Lord that fateful day. And if they were not truly converted, if what we are given here is a display of false worship, of a seed that fell into the stony places and sprung up for a season but over time it was proven to have no root, then it will serve as another testimony against them in that last great day of judgement. What will it be with you, then? Will your worship be true as is what appears these sailors’ was, or will your worship stand as testimony against you. Submit yourself unto the Lord, truly, sincerely, not vainly. Ask yourself, am I upright before the Lord? Am I truly penitent for all sin; for the sin that does more easily beset me; for the sin which God may be pursuing with His displeasure? Do I own the justice of all His dealings with me? Submit yourself before the Lord. Heed the example of these men, of Jonah and of the mariners, and do what is right before the Lord.**

**Brothers and sisters, there are times in our lives when the Lord will employ us in his service despite our disobedience, to demonstrate that the grace, the fruit, and the glory are entirely his. This is what we see here in this great example set before us. Do not feign repentance, for the Lord can see through your false attempts,**



**and He will not honor what you only pay lip service to. Bear the fruit of true repentance. Humble yourself before Him and plead with Him for mercy, and He will give it to you. And sincerely submit to His will. Worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Offer your sacrifice of praise unto Him which is the fruit of your lips. And make vows unto Him to serve Him all the days of your life.**