

Mid-Week Devotion

A Whale of a Prayer

Read Jonah *Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice.*



Our prayer life is everything! As a pastor I spend more time telling people how important our prayer life is and how necessary it is to spend quite time with God than probably anything else. This is because if we are not praying, then we're not in relationship; and if we're not in relationship, then we are lost. No one learned this the hard way more than Jonah did.

To avoid the mission God had given Jonah in Nineveh, Jonah tried sailing to Tarshish. Yet God has His own unique ways of getting us where He wants us to be. So God, in His own humorous style, decided that what Jonah really needed was a ride, so He sent him one. I never met Jonah; however, I suspect that he never imagined that he would get to ride back to Nineveh inside the belly of a great fish. The three days he spent in that great fish did wonderful things for Jonah's

prayer life, which may have been more important to God than getting Jonah to the right place.

Some people get all hung up on whether or not this story ever really happened, but to do that only leads you further away from God's message, instead of leading you deeper into it. Could it have happened, absolutely, God can do anything. But the question for us is not whether it did happen back then, but rather does it happen today.

Do people start off in one direction, then get swallowed up in something awful, only to discover that the crises has actually brought them to the right place with God? You bet! I see it all the time. The thing to remember is that our God is a God of miracles. The real miracle here is not that God made a fish big enough to swallow Jonah whole, or even that Jonah survived inside for three days, but rather that even deep inside its belly, God was available to him, and He is also available to you. Even in your loneliness, your dark nights that seem to go on forever, God is only a prayer away. When you're in the belly of great despair, the one thing you have plenty of time to do, is pray. So when you find yourself swallowed up by life, in need of a miracle, just remember that the greatest miracle of all is that Jesus is only a prayer away. And when Jesus arrives on the scene, well anything can happen, and usually does!

Mighty and Gracious God, thank You for being only a prayer away. Even when I am deep in the belly of despair, swallowed up by the troubles of life, may I be comforted by the knowledge that all I need to do is cry out Your name and You'll be there to save me. In Jesus name, Amen.

Blessings, Pastor Ed