

Sept44, bomb raids, 700mi S Tokyo, 9 shot down; 8 captured/killed; 1 ditched, life raft. US planes shot Japanese boats sent to capture him. Floating in raft, head wound, weeping with fear. USS Finback submarine surfaced in front of him. 20-year-old Lt. George HW Bush. Unbelievable rescue!

Main Point: God uses times of intense difficulty in our lives for His greater purposes!

1. Purposeful Refinement (1:17-2:1)

Sometimes the place you least want to be is precisely where God wants you for a season. Refuge, fortress (belly); not of our own choosing! On the run; refuge provided!

Ps59:16-17, “You’ve been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. O my Strength, I’ll sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.” Mercy!

Perspective: belly of fish (x2); “Sheol” (v2); 110° inside; 3 days: completely dead; die to self!

Jonah forsook God; God couldn’t forsake Jonah. When we’re faithless; He remains faithful (2Tim2)!

Richard Philips, “God’s promise of grace remained despite Jonah’s folly in sin. He had deserted God, but the very fact that he hadn’t yet drowned proved that God hadn’t deserted him.” Flipped.

The way up is down; humility, brokenness: **1Ptr5:6**, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.” Jesus, “Whoever loses his life will save it.”

Allow what God’s doing in life to push you toward Him! Silence broken: *then* Jonah prayed to LORD!

God doesn’t abandon us when our lives and actions don’t match our beliefs; growth in holiness isn’t instant. **Isa48:10**, “I have refined you, but not as silver; I’ve tried you in the furnace of affliction.”

2. Personal Revelation (vv2-6)

God uses times of intense difficulty in our lives to reveal more of Himself in personal and intimate ways: nearness of God; “He” becomes “You”/“Your” (5x)! Answered; heard!

No confession or request: thanksgiving! Nothing original, every phrase is from 14 Pss; Save for a rainy day! What do you really believe when everything is stripped away, laid bare before God?

What do you cling to? For me: Ps119:68; Gen50:20; Ps90:14; Ps56:9.

Ps19, Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; more to be desired than gold; by them your servant is warned; in keeping them there’s great reward, keep your servant from presumptuous sins.

vv2-3: *You* cast, *your* waves/billows: God’s hand! Sheol, deep: pit, grave, abode of dead, OT view of Hell: judgment; sin brings judgment, which brings death! Jonah knew! He wasn’t looking for rescue!

vv4-6: Barred from God; hope for mercy: Temple (x2): Blood-sprinkled Mercy seat on Throne of Grace! Sacrifice covers Law. We’re not welcomed on our own terms! **Heb10:4,14**, “It’s impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, [but] by a single offering [Jesus] has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

Downward trajectory until now, middle of v6, shifts from death to life! **This** is the miracle; not the fish!

Corrie ten Boom, “You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have.”

Offended party orchestrates the rescue operation! Eph2:8-9. Not the labors of my hands!

3. Powerful Reminders (vv7-9)

vv7-8, God uses times of intense difficulty in our lives to strip away idols / lies, to show / remind us of what's true. Cling to worthless idols: anything we allow to replace the supremacy of God in our lives.

Blatant in others (sailors); subtle in our own; ch4: Jonah's still clueless! Our hearts are idol factories!

Steadfast love: used of man: benevolent, gracious; used of God: constant and abiding; unfailing love of God secured for us in Christ. **SLJ**, "God loves you with a Never Stopping, Never Giving up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love." Always the plan; before foundation of the world, Lamb slain!

Everything points to this reality: *answer, hear, temple, brought up from pit*; end v9, salvation is God's!

Summary of the book of Jonah; the entire Bible, and all of redemptive history! Reminder of the fact that we're not in control! We are utterly and completely incapable on our own; impossible.

Horatius Bonar, "Grace burst forth spontaneously from the bosom of eternal love and rested not until it had removed every impediment and found its way to the sinner's side, swelling round him in full flow. Grace does away with the distance between the sinner and God, which sin had created."

Cry from within: fish, but more importantly, Jonah! Response: **v9**: same language as sailors: universal response to God.

Ps50:15, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I'll deliver you, and you shall glorify me." Worthy of our everything! Sacrifice and vows because of who He is and what He has done!

Now there's *nothing* off limits! Why here in Jonah? We must deal with our sin before preaching it; grasp God's mercy and love for ourselves. Message of repentance isn't just for the Ninevites and those "far from God." **Mk9:24**, "Father cried out, 'I believe...help my unbelief!'"

Recap: God uses times of intense difficulty in our lives for His greater purposes!

Benediction: Rom8:35,37-39