

## JONAH SAVED

### Jonah 2:1-10

On 10-1-1997 Tony Bullimore was on the solo round world yacht race when his yacht capsized 2000km south of Perth. He was in the upturned hull of his boat on his own in water that was around zero degrees. He thought it would be too far from land to hope for rescue but three days later an Australian Navy ship got there to rescue him. When he was pulled into the rubber Zodiac he kissed the duty officer in his relief and thankfulness. If you want to watch it go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AkXFaCdMQ0>

How would you feel? On your own, dark, cold, with little food, and 'beyond rescue'? It looked hopeless. There was certainly no way he could save himself.

Imagine the relief when he heard rescuers come. In thankfulness he kisses the duty officer. Later he says what great blokes Aussies are.

Tony was rescued by Australian Navy. In Jonah 2, Jonah is saved from sea by God.

The story so far:

- God told Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach.
- Jonah disobeyed - he ran away from God.
  
- He went in a ship to Tarshish - the opposite direction.
- God sent a great storm that nearly wrecked the ship.
- The sailors threw Jonah overboard and the storm stopped.
  
- Chapter 1 ends with Jonah being swallowed by a great fish.  
*"Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." (1:17)*

The Lord provided the fish and so saved Jonah from the sea. Chapter 2 is Jonah's prayer inside the fish. It is said before he is vomited out. *"From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God."* (2:1) Note: he has already been saved. Chapter 2 is a Psalm giving thanks that God has rescued him. It is in Hebrew poetry and uses poetic language to describe what happened.

## 1. Jonah sinks

All looked hopeless.

<sup>3</sup> *"You hurled me into the depths,  
into the very heart of the seas,  
and the currents swirled about me;  
all your waves and breakers swept over me."*

Although the sailors actually threw him overboard he knows it is God who brought them to it. It is God's judgment on him for disobeying.

<sup>4</sup> *I said, "I have been banished from your sight;"*

He feels he has been cut off from God because of his sin. He knows he deserves it. Sin separates us from God.

<sup>5</sup> *"The engulfing waters threatened me,  
the deep surrounded me;  
seaweed was wrapped around my head.*

<sup>6</sup> *To the roots of the mountains I sank down;  
the earth beneath barred me in for ever."*

I have never been close to drowning but I have been dumped by a series of big waves in the surf many times. I have started to worry about not getting my breath. I often worry when swimming in a river of getting tangled in weed and being unable to get to the surface. It would be a terrible experience. Jonah says, *"Seaweed was wrapped around my head."* He was trapped. There was no escape.

He speaks of sinking to the bottom of the sea where his body would remain, <sup>6</sup> *"To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in for ever."*

It looked like this was the end. Like Tony Bullimore there was no way he could save himself.

What about your relationship with God? Do you think you can save yourself? Or do you know that your sin cuts you off from God? That without God saving you your situation is hopeless? Like Tony Bullimore without Navy. Do you depend totally on Jesus' death to save you?

Some people think God will look at their lives to see if there is more good than bad; that he weighs up the good and bad.

Imagine I drive 10 kilometres to church. For 9km I obey all traffic laws: I keep the speed, I stop at all the red lights, I keep to the keep left and so on. But for the last one kilometre I am running late, I drive at 80kph, I run some red lights, I cross the double lines.

A policeman pulls me over and asks for my license. I try to reason with him. "I kept laws for 9 kilometres. I only broke the law in 1 kilometre! I drove well much more than I drove badly!! Surely the good outweighs the bad." He continues to write out the ticket.

But I say, "Perhaps I could make up for breaking to law. I could stop at all the green lights on the way home!!" No, I have broken the law and deserve the penalty. I would probably lose my licence.

We have all broken God's laws. We have all rebelled and gone our own way. We all deserve to be separated from God for ever. There is nothing we can do to make things right. Have you really taken this to heart?

## **2. Jonah prays**

*"In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry." (2:2)*

*"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple." (2:7)*

His life has almost gone. He has sunk to the bottom. The darkness was closing in around him. With his last breath he calls out to the Lord and he is saved.

That's all we have to do also. No matter what you have done, what your life is like. You don't have to straighten your life out first. You just have to turn to God and trust him. God is just a prayer away. All we have to do is say we want to come back to him; to ask for forgiveness and we are saved. We are made God's Children.

Have you taken that step? If not, or if you are not sure what this all means talk to someone. Talk to Bruce or one of the staff at church.

### 3. Jonah Saved

God saves Jonah. *"Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah."* (1:17) *"But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit."* (2:6) *"I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord'"* (2:9) God sent the fish (1:7) and God caused it to vomit Jonah up (2:10).

The book of Jonah is all about a God who saves; saves the sailors from storm, saves Jonah from the sea, and saves the people of Nineveh from judgment.

In the same way we are saved if we turn to God and put our trust in the Lord Jesus. We are forgiven, but much more: we are made God's children, held in his love, we receive all his promises, he hears our prayers, he gives us eternal life.

### 4. Jonah Rejoices

Chapter 2 is a Psalm of thanksgiving. In it Jonah praises God. *"I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good."* (2:9) Jonah is filled with joyful thanks to God. Like Tony Bullimore when he kisses the duty officer overcome with relief and thanks to his rescuers.

Are you filled with *"shouts of grateful praise"* for your salvation? Is your salvation the thing that motivates and shapes your life in response to God?

In the Prayer Book there is a prayer of thanksgiving that says, *"We bless you for our creation and preservation and all the blessings of this life; But above all, for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory."*

Do you thank God for your salvation "above all" other things?  
Do you feel that this is the best thing that has ever happened to you?

If so give thanks now. If not talk to one of us.