

JOURNEY TOWARD GOD - 2

Experiencing God's Salvation

"But the Lord provided a
great fish to swallow
Jonah...."
- Jonah 1:17

"God's answers should
shape my heart and not just
my circumstances."

The book of Jonah is about a reluctant prophet, but even more so about a persistent God. The story could have ended with Jonah's disobedience, but it doesn't! Even though Jonah was responsible for a situation of his own making, he discovered that it's never too late to call on the Lord.

Unfortunately, the rest of the story is also a reminder that it's often more easier to shape a prayer than a heart.

Welcome

Have you ever felt, "My whole life passed before my eyes?" What happened? In the ebb and flow of your life last year, when were you at "low tide?" At "high tide?"

Word

Read Jonah 1:17-2:20.

1. What does Jonah 2:3 suggest about the way in which Jonah viewed his circumstances (compare with 1:15)?
2. As Jonah prays, he preaches. What do you learn from Jonah's prayer?
3. When have you felt like Jonah--far from God, enmeshed in a situation beyond your control? How then was your life brought "up from the pit?"
4. Do you believe Jonah's change of circumstances also brought about a change of heart? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever struggled with thinking either that you had no right to call on the Lord, or that He would pay no attention (because the messy situation was the result of your own rebellion)? What does this passage teach you about prayer? About the heart and character of God?

Worship

Praise God for graciously and inexplicably delivering you--even from disasters of your own foolish and rebellious making! Possible songs, "Amazing Grace" (129), "Boundless Love" (325), "God Is So Good" (83), "The Steadfast Love of the Lord" (123).

Works

God insists on demonstrating His kindness, when we so often feel perfectly free to exhibit our bitterness.

Experiencing the kindness of God should lead us to repentance. Is there anyone you are harboring bitterness toward right now? Take the steps necessary to address the animosity in that relationship this week.