

**Jonah: The Depths of God's Grace**  
 Fall Bible Study 2025  
 Dr. Justin Terrell

**Jonah 1:17-2:10**  
 Session Three

"It is only by the grace of God that man can obey the law of God." – John Blanchard

**Grace Begins with God (1:17)**

1. **Large Fish**

- a. **"The Lord appointed a great fish"** - The word "appointed" has been translated as "ordained, employed, prepared, and arranged," and it's used four times in Jonah to describe God's supernatural power to control nature to accomplish His will. Just as God controlled the sea and the storm, He also controls the "great fish" to be at this exact place, at this exact moment in time. The fish was already in place before Jonah called out to God. It was because of God's grace in Jonah's life.

2. **Application**

- a. **Salvation:** Just as God appointed a great fish to rescue Jonah, God already appointed a Savior to redeem us from our sins.
  - **Eph. 1:3-6** - *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace."*
- b. **Question:** What are some other ways that God foresees our failures and difficulties and graciously sends us help?

**God's Grace is Revealed in Our Lowest Moments (2:1-7)**

1. **Sheol**

- a. **"For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your breakers and your waves passed over me"** (3) – Although it was the sailors who physically tossed Jonah overboard, it was really God who wanted him thrown out to sea.

- b. ***"The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head. To the roots of the mountains I went down, to the land whose bars closed upon me forever."*** (2:5-6a) – Jonah describes his drowning experience. He descended to the bottom of the sea, and has the sense of being entombed on the seafloor.
- c. ***"[In] the belly of Sheol I cried"*** (2b) – This phrase literally means, *"the depths of the grave."* The Jews understood *"Sheol"* as the place of the dead, where a person is separated from God. Jonah felt like he was dead and headed toward eternal judgment.
- d. ***"Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight'"*** (4a) – Jonah is sensing a spiritual separation from God and everything has been lost. He was not only describing his earthly death, but also a spiritual death. Jonah knew he was on the brink of hell and he was seconds away from being there.
- e. ***"When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord"*** (7) – As Jonah was laying on the bottom of the sea, that's when he remembered the Lord. Until this point, Jonah's heart was still resistant to God's will, he was still fleeing from God's presence. But now he's openly calling God to save him.

## God's Grace is Received through Faith

### 1. Prayer

- a. ***"I remembered the Lord...I called out to the Lord...and my prayer came to you in your holy temple"*** (7, 2) - After Jonah remembered the Lord, he called out to God in prayer. He turned to God as his only source of hope and placed his full trust in him. It was at this point that the great fish swallowed up Jonah and rescued him from death. Jonah was now inside the fish for three days and three nights.
  - **John 14:13-14** - *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."*
  - **James 5:16** - *"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*
- b. ***"Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with a voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay"*** (2:8-9a) – This verse has been translated, *"Those who pay regard to vail idols forfeit the grace that God is willing to give."* In other words, those who continue turning to their own interests and the things of the world will never receive God's grace.
- c. ***"'Salvation belongs to the LORD!' And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land"*** (2:9b-10) – At the end, Jonah gives God praise and glory for his rescue. He was praising God for delivering him from physical death and spiritual rebellion.
- d. ***"Salvation belongs to the Lord!"*** (9) – This statement is the main point of the book. God is the only One who can truly provide us salvation in this life. His grace is the only antidote for our sinful condition, and without it we are lost and on our way to destruction.