



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Jonah: God's Grace for Those Who Run
Speaker: Helen Kim Nowalk, Community Life Pastor
Scripture: Jonah 2:1-6

¹ From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ² He said:

"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.

³ 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.

⁴ I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'

⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me,^l
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.

⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But you, LORD my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

Sermon Outline:

Jonah is not a typical prophet, as he resisted God's call for him and ended up running in the opposite direction that God had called him to go. Jonah believed he could run from the presence of the Lord. The place where God was calling him to is a horrible place, so we can understand why Jonah turned in the opposite direction.

This text is the beginning of a prayer that Jonah prays to God from the belly of the fish. Jonah's finds himself stuck in a place that is dark, closed in and ugly. It is only after Jonah is swallowed up and in the belly of this fish that he decides to pray and call out to God.

We never know Jesus is all we need, until Jesus is all we have.

God's grace for those who run:

- God's grace is found in hopeless places.
- God's grace is active, not passive.
- God's grace hears.
- God's grace brings us out of death into life.

What matters in prayer is not where you pray from but who you pray to.

Prayers is not limited by where we are, nor it is limited by the type of history we have.

We are to pray in a way that looks to who God has been in history and call out to God in faith for our future. God hears our voiceless prayers and responds to these prayers.

Jonah receives a word from God, but he didn't hear God. Yet, in his deep distress, Jonah calls out and prays to God because he knows that God will hear him. Jonah was heading into a pit, a place of death, but knew that that God could bring life out of death.

Jesus gave up his life willingly, turning toward the pit, so that he could bring us out of death into life. God not only gives us life, but he also dies so that he can give us life.

Jesus never allows anyone to go through anything that he hasn't already experienced. He has been broken and humiliated, and he understands – he is with us in the pit.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Helen Kim Nowalk, Community Life Pastor, continues our Lenten sermon series through the book of Jonah. Pastor Helen explores the extravagant reaches of God's grace in the book of Jonah and what this grace might look like in our own lives.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, did you have people in your life who offered you unmerited grace? What did those experiences mean to you and how did they effect the way you do or do not offer unmerited grace to others in your life today? Journal your answers to these questions, offering them up to God and maybe sharing them in your small group.
3. How many times have you run in the opposite direction, not listening to God calling? Are you currently running from God? Offer your answers up to God asking for his forgiveness and guidance in helping you to follow him, especially when you want to run in the opposite direction.
4. How do you feel when you hear: "We never know Jesus is all we need, until Jesus is all we have"? Have there been times in your life when you experienced this first-hand? What was this experience like for you? How did God speak into your life during this time? Share your responses with your small group or a trusted brother or sister in Christ.
5. Is there a death that you are currently facing? Maybe there is something in your life where you feel like it is a dead end? Can you find time this week, offering whatever this is up to God, knowing that God alone can bring life out of death?