



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Jonah: Praying Inside of a Fish**

**Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor**

**Scripture: Jonah 2:7:10**

<sup>7</sup> "When my life was ebbing away,  
I remembered you, LORD,  
and my prayer rose to you,  
to your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup> "Those who cling to worthless idols  
turn away from God's love for them.

<sup>9</sup> But I, with shouts of grateful praise,  
will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good.

I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'"

<sup>10</sup> And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

#### **Sermon Outline:**

In this part of scripture from the book of Jonah, we see Jonah praying inside the belly of a fish. He is in a cramped, dark, enclosed space and is experiencing being in an in-between place – he is not dead but is also not alive. As we see Jonah pray, we learn important lessons about the spiritual life.

At some point in our lives, we will all find ourselves confined in a tight, dark enclosed space like Jonah. When we find ourselves feeling trapped, we can turn to God. We know what it is like to live in an in-between space, just existing from one day to the next.

**When we find ourselves feeling trapped, we can turn to God.**

On the outside Jonah getting swallowed by a fish can look like the end for Jonah, but on the inside God is carrying Jonah where he wants him to go. Sometimes life can swallow us whole, and it looks and feels like the end, but God is moving and working on the inside. The mystery of our faith is that God can use all of this to carry his message forward. The message of Jonah is that God saves us in strange ways.

**Our interpretation of our situations often need a fresh revelation.**

**Sometimes God saves us from being swallowed.**

**And sometimes God allows us to be swallowed because he's about to save us.**

#### **Things we learn from Jonah:**

- When nobody is there to hear our cry, God hears us.
- Jonah's prayers are not original.
- God doesn't put a time limit on us.
- Jonah is not saved because he remembered. He is saved because the Lord remembered him.
- Jonah's confinement gives him greater clarity to identify idols.

An idol is a good thing, that that turns into a god-thing, that ultimately becomes a bad thing.

Jonah swallowed by fish and in its belly for three days. Jesus died and rose after three days and swallowed death.

God saves us in some strange ways and moves towards us in love. When we find ourselves feeling trapped, we can turn to God. Whatever fish you find yourself being carried in right now, know that God is with you and has not forgotten you.

**Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, continues our Lenten sermon series through the book of Jonah. Pastor Rich continues to explore Jonah's prayer inside the fish and what it teaches us about God and the spiritual life.

**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 grow up experiencing times of feeling as though you were trapped? How did those experiences shape the way you experience being in a difficult situation now? Journal your answers to these questions, offering them up to God and maybe sharing them in your small group.
3. Where do you go when you are in a tight space feeling confined and wondering when you will get out? Who do you turn to talk with when you are in a tight space? How do you relate to God? Do you busy yourself with work or other things so as not to turn to God, or do you use substances to help numb the pain not to remember the dark place you find yourself in? Can you share the answers to these questions with your small group or a trusted brother or sister in Christ?
4. Can you identify idols that you might be clinging to as you find yourself being swallowed by a fish? Maybe those idols look like a relationship or have to do with your money? When we are in tight space, all the things we cling to will not save us only God can save us. Maybe the Lord is trying to get your attention right now to let go of any idols and turn back to him instead? Offer your answers to these questions up to God in your prayer time this week, seeking guidance, forgiveness, and healing where you need it in your life right now.