

Two Lies and a Truth

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[0 : 00] All right, well y'all thank you for being here today. I hope you've enjoyed the service so far. I want to thank Jared and Tyler and Coulter for leading us so well in worship today as well as our choir.

And thank you for all of you participating. We are going to continue in our study of the book of Jonah today. So let's look at Jonah. We're going to be in chapter 2.

Chapter 2. Jonah chapter 2. Last week, while you turn there, I'm going to grab my remote. You don't have it? You really don't? Is it hiding over here, anybody?

Let's play Where's the Remote. Thank you. See, here's what happened. I put my stuff down right here this morning. And I thought that's where we were going to sit.

[1 : 05] And then right before church started, I looked over and my family was over here. So I said, well, I'm not going to sit apart from my family. So I grabbed my stuff and moved over here. But I left my remote behind. So I apologize for that.

That's getting to be a weekly thing, isn't it? It's like, where's the remote? That's all right. Okay. The runaway prophet is what we looked at in Jonah chapter 1.

And just by way of review, we said two questions. Number one, why do we run? We all know Jonah ran. So why do we run?

And it's usually because of our lack of faith. Our lack of faith in God as good as we believe he is. And as correct as we believe he is. As just as we believe he is.

Usually we just have a lack of faith in those things when we run from God. And then why does God pursue us? Why doesn't he just let us go? He pursues us to draw us back to himself.

[2 : 01] So that was from our study of Jonah 1. And our takeaway was God's plan always wins. Despite you and I fighting against God and his plan, just like Jonah did, God's plan will always win.

The goal is, will it involve us? So today, I want to remind you of this little game. Anybody ever heard of Two Truths and a Lie? Yeah?

That's a fun game, right? Do you feel like we should play it? Okay, then let's do it. Lane wants to play it, so let's play it, all right? These are Two Truths and a Lie about me.

I once fell into a fountain. I have been arrested. Nobody take that little clip and use it against me at some point, all right?

I have eaten a live animal. Now, how many of y'all think, I'm telling you right now, one of these things is a lie, but two of them are true.

[3 : 06] Which is a terrifying thought, probably. How many of y'all think the lie is number one, I once fell into a fountain? Anybody? By way of uplifted hand? A couple of us, all right.

Three, I think I counted four. Number two, how many of you think that one's a lie? I have been arrested. The people who did the background check on me early on are like, was there an arrest in there somewhere?

Number three, I have eaten a live animal. How many of y'all think that one's a lie? I've never been arrested, folks.

I'm sorry. I've never been arrested. And now I know you all really want to know how I fell in the fountain, right? No? That's not the one?

All right. It was a goldfish. It was a goldfish in a little bag. It was this like Sunday school promotion at church when I was young, probably 20 or something, maybe even younger than that.

[4 : 10] And I'm working with the little kids in Sunday school. And the promotion was, if you do such and such, bring whatever, get enough points, then Brother Sam is going to eat a live goldfish.

Now, did I chew it up? No, I swallowed it. The people from PETA are probably not happy with me right now. But I don't know what goldfish lifespans are anyway.

I don't know how much longer he had. But anyway. Yeah. It was gross, too. It was nasty. Put him in a little styrofoam cup. Had to show the kids, make sure he was really there.

Tiny little goldfish. And just whoop, down the hatch. There you go. But I will say, the sardine I ate at VBS was way nastier than that goldfish was. So, the things we will do for kids' ministry.

Okay. I'm not sure how that led any kids closer to Jesus. But there you go. It is what it is. Today, we are not talking about two truths and a lie.

[5 : 13] We're talking about two lies and a truth. Two lies and a truth. It's worse than two truths and a lie. Okay. Jonah chapter 2 is where we find these two lies and a truth.

Let's begin. If you're able. You know what? We're going to read this whole chapter. So, if y'all want to keep your seats, that's okay. All right? I know sometimes with some of us, it's a little harder to stand for length of period than others.

So, all right. Jonah chapter 2, verse 1. Here we go. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from inside the fish. He said, I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble, and he answered me.

I called to you from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me. You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me.

I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. Then I said, O Lord, you have driven me from your presence, yet I will look once more toward your holy temple. I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me.

[6 : 14] Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates locked shut forever. But you, O Lord, my God, snatch me from the jaws of death.

As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord, and my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy temple. Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies. But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows.

For my salvation comes from the Lord alone. Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

Let's pray together. God, we read a very unique passage of scripture just now. And then we read a miracle that you did, one of a series in this story.

I pray that you would reveal to us the truth from this passage of scripture. That we would be very careful to always stick by your truth.

[7 : 26] And remember, self-deception is always lurking right around the corner. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. What is our first takeaway after reading the prayer of Jonah?

My first takeaway is, that is one of the most beautiful prayers in scripture. Right? I mean, you read this thing from a literary point of view.

You know, I'm sure Laurie Schaffner would agree. This is beautiful. It's the descriptions he puts in there. Talking about how he's plummeting down through the water. All this. I mean, it is impressive.

Also, it is orthodox Christianity. I mean, you read through this thing. There's all kinds of great things about how God delivers. And, you know, you, I will look once more toward your holy temple.

God, you, I called to you from the land of the dead. And you heard me. All these great things in this prayer. So my first thought is, wow, what a prayer. What about y'all?

[8 : 29] Yeah? You feeling it? What about somebody else? Anybody? What are you thinking? Don't be shy. Just the talk back moment. You like it?

It's good? It's feeling good? Mike was like, it went okay when Lane said yeah, so I'm going to say yeah too. Is that the right answer? That was good. So, first of all, we have to back up and think what do we already know about Jonah?

When we're trying to discern the meaning and the heart behind this prayer, we've got to back up and say what do we know about Jonah? Well, we learned last week in 2 Kings, we see the other direct reference to this prophet Jonah.

He was a prophet of God. He was called by God, commissioned by God to speak on God's behalf to God's people. And we see in 2 Kings, he served under the time of the evil king Jeroboam.

This was the king of a good king, Joash, but this man did not do as his father did as far as honoring God. He went astray and served himself and served other gods and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

[9 : 45] And Jonah was serving as a prophet during the time of this evil king. Well, there was another prophet named Amos. And so Jeroboam brought both prophets together and he said, I'm

going to battle.

How am I going to do? And Jonah immediately prophesied this great victory for him, even though he was an evil king in the sight of God. He said, God's going to give you a mighty victory today.

Amos had a little bit different story. He said, King, you're going to die by the sword. Guess who won? The prophet Amos, the one who truly said what God had told him.

And didn't just say what the king wanted to hear. So, what happened? The king died by the sword, just as Amos had said.

So, we've already got our radar up about Jonah. This guy doesn't seem to be all that trustworthy. How close is he to God? Is he an actual false prophet?

[10:46] You can't trust what he says? So, we know that he's got problems. Then we read Jonah chapter 1.

And we know that God gives him a direct command. To go and preach the gospel. Preach about the one true God to this city of terrible people.

Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrians. The most feared army in the world in that day. And he says, no way God, I'm out of here.

And catches a ship to go as far across the known world as he could possibly get. From where God wanted him to be. So, number one, he's not saying what God actually says.

Number two, he's not doing what God wants. And here we find Jonah on the heels of one of the most selfish decisions you could ever make.

[11:43] And that is asking other people. Remember last Sunday? The sailors in the boat asking them to throw him overboard. Instead of simply falling to his knees and saying, God, forgive me for not obeying you.

Stop this storm. Save our lives. I will go and do what you asked me to do. God is a prayer away all the time. But not just words.

It's turning our heart back to God. If he had done that, this whole story could have been different. But instead, he says, guys, just sacrifice me.

Just throw me in the water. Dramatic much, Jonah? And he says, guys, just throw me in the water. And they don't want to do it. Because they're halfway decent guys, you know? We don't want to kill you, man. Just call out to your God. Oh, no, he wouldn't do it. He wouldn't call out to his God.

[12:43] So, they finally throw him in the water. And then they call out to his God for repentance. And they see that God instantly answers, calms the storm.

And then they turn in their hearts to the one true God. So, this is the end of Jonah 1. And now we get into Jonah 2. So, let's go verses 1 through 9, verse by verse.

Ready? Jonah chapter 2 and verse 1. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the fish.

Finally, that was the one word that jumped out to me when I read this.

Why didn't he pray before? Why is he only just now praying? He's a prophet of God. Well, I can tell you just because you're God's man.

Or you're a preacher. Or you're a prophet. Or you're a pastor. Or you've been a Christian for a long time. Or you're chairman of deacons, Bruce. Or you're a deacon. Or you're a Sunday school teacher.

[13:41] Or you're a trustee. Or you're whatever just because you've been a Christian for a long time. And you've got a title attached to you for God's sake. Listen. Doesn't mean that you turn to God all the time when you should.

Jonah didn't. I don't. There's no way you do either. We all turn to God far less than we should. Usually it's one of the last things that we end up doing.

Because we try to fix it in our own strength. We try to fix it in our own might. And finally when we keep running up against a brick wall. When we just can't figure it out. We finally turn to God.

And that's exactly what we see Jonah doing. Finally from inside the fish. The fish comes along.

Swallows up Jonah. Probably a whale, right? But who knows? God can do whatever he wants. He could have swelled up that goldfish that I ate.

To swallow Jonah if he wanted to. So verse 2. He said I cried out to God. Here starts Jonah prayer. Here begins Jonah's prayer.

[14:45] I cried out to God. To the Lord. In my great trouble. Look at the screen for a minute. This great trouble.

Jonah caused it. He was the one. God didn't bring him this great trouble. God brought him a job to do. And then the trouble got increasingly worse.

As Jonah ran farther and farther away. From what God asked him to do. That's often the case it is for you and me. God doesn't plan.

For the horrible things sometimes. That happen in our lives. Sometimes we stray further and further away from him. And we get further and further from the life that he intended for us. Now the good news is.

All it takes is turning back to God. And it doesn't take that long to get back to where he wants you to be. God can just get you right back on course. Because no trouble is too big for him to get you out of.

[15 : 48] No sin is too great that he can't forgive. God is always right there. Waiting for us. He was always right there for Jonah.

But it took Jonah so long to finally turn back to God. And when he did. What does he say? God I cried out to you in my great trouble. And you answered me.

I called to you from the land of the dead. And you heard me. Then in verse 3. You threw me down into the ocean depths. Anybody catch what he just said?

God you threw me into the ocean. Oh no. I don't even think so buddy. That was your big idea. God never told you to get in the water.

God told you to go preach to Nineveh. You did all these other things ever since then. This was all you. God rescued you from what you did.

[16 : 48] So I've got a problem with this prayer. Right at the beginning. He seems to be intimating that God caused this great trouble. And then he boldly states in verse 3.

God you threw me into the ocean depths. I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me. I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves.

You know what the really ironic part in here? If you look close enough in this whole story. This whole book. You can find a lot of humor. A lot of kind of read between the lines humor.

Jonah says I was buried. Way down deep. Beneath your wild and stormy waves. What he doesn't realize is. As soon as he hit the water. We read in chapter 1.

That the waves stopped. The storm stopped. It was all still. He says no you were buried beneath a very still calm ocean. Because the whole reason for this storm.

[17 : 46] Was you disobeying God. It wasn't judgment. On anybody else. It was God trying to get your attention. But it didn't work.

He took the coward's way out. Decided to throw it. Throw yourself into the water. End your life. So to speak. But God had other plans. So.

I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. Verse 4. Then I said oh Lord. You have driven me from your presence. Again. Blaming God for what he did.

Now look. Before we get too judgy of Jonah. How many of us have ever felt like. God was just nowhere to be found. I know I have.

There have been some dark. Difficult moments in my life. And I'm looking around. Where is God in all this? We read similar things from some of the psalmists.

[18 : 48] As they wrote. Something along the lines of. God. You seem to have driven me away. You seem to be nowhere around. I understand. That when God is not present here.

In the form of a person. As he was when Jesus was walking this earth. For 33 years. It's sometimes hard. To put. To not be able to put sight.

To our faith. And just have to believe. By faith that God is there. But time and time again. He reassures us. Of his presence. Time and time again. He reveals himself to us.

He shows us. That he is real. He is there. He is working. He is active. He is involved. He is all knowing. He is in control. Time and time again. We see the evidence of this.

In our lives. Evidence of the divine. Jonah forgot that. He said. God. You drove me away. From your presence. Oh no. No buddy.

[19 : 42] God wanted you walking with him. God was going to go with you. All the way to Nineveh. God was going to be there. As you preached. To that scary city. To those scary people.

To those people. Who didn't want to hear. What you have to say. They don't believe in your God. They don't want to appreciate your message. They won't appreciate you telling them. That they're doing wrong. That God wants them to repent.

Or he's going to destroy them. Yeah. That's a terrifying thing. For God to ask him to do. But God was going to walk with you. All the way. But instead. You tried to run. From God's presence. The very fact. That Jonah thought. He could leave. The presence of God. Shows that he didn't have. An accurate understanding. Of who God really is.

And he shows that. In the next part of it. Lord. I've driven. You have driven me. From your presence. Jonah says. Then he says. Yet I will look. Once more. Toward your holy temple.

[20 : 39] There seems to be. A consistent theme. We'll see it again. At the end of the chapter. That Jonah. Jonah looked at God. As residing at the temple. That God's location.

Was at the temple. You know how many people. That have that idea. About church. Like God lives at church. Anybody ever heard.

That kind of thing. Whether people actually. Said that. But the way they talk. It feels like. Well you can't say that. In church. Well. You can say it. Outside of church. Because then God won't hear you. Or what. He's everywhere. Y'all. He's omnipresent. He created this world. He's so much bigger. Than we could ever imagine.

You can't get away. From God. Now that should be a. Good thing. Not a bad thing. But when you're running from God. That's a terrifying thing.

[21 : 36] And here was Jonah. God you drove me away. From your temple. I just wanted to stay. Back at the temple. In Jerusalem. And I just wanted to worship you there.

I didn't want to go off. To those bad people. I didn't want to go. Tell the gospel. To those. You want those people. To be your children. Oh please. They're not like us.

Okay. They're not going to fit in. With us. Now we would never have. That kind of attitude. Would we? We would never want to look at. People who don't fit our mold.

Or fit what we think. Church people ought to look like. Or talk like. Or smell like. Or whatever else. We don't want to. Branch out beyond.

What we're comfortable with. But that's where God wants to take us. Wants to get us out of that comfort zone. He wants to reach. Those who seem.

[22 : 33] Unreachable. Bible calls it. He saves to the uttermost. Anybody. Anywhere. Anytime.

God can save them. If he chooses. And he chose. And Jonah wouldn't do it. So. He says. He believed that God's presence.

Was found. At the temple. But we know. God is everywhere. God is at all times. God was going to be there in Nineveh. God was going to go with Jonah.

As he ran. God was going to go before Jonah. And cause that storm. God was going to go. With Jonah. As he fell through the water. And bring that fish along. To save his life. God's presence. Was everywhere. Now look at verses five and six. So now he. Very. Using very flowery language. He describes. His journey. Through the ocean.

[23 : 29] I sank beneath the waves. The waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself. Around my head. Sorry. I just. I'm like.

Man. You're. You're a lot. Aren't you? I sank down. To the very roots. Of the mountains. I was imprisoned. In the earth. Whose gates. Locked shut.

Forever. Well. Thankfully. You're wrong. They didn't lock shut. Forever. God came through. And. And got you. God liberated you. He rescued you.

So what do we see. In verses five and six. Jonah dramatically. Describes his misfortune. He felt like. His misfortune. Was the biggest. In the world. You can see it. Coming through. He felt like. This was it. This was the end. And. He just. Dramatically. Thought. My life is over. In that moment. That I'd just be. Terrified. Probably.

[24 : 24] Wouldn't be turning. To flowery language. To describe my death. But here's Jonah. Dramatically. Describing his misfortune. And then we get down. To the second part.

Of verse six. But you. Oh Lord. My God. Snatched me. From the jaws. Of death. Jonah. Finally. Gives God.

Some credit. Finally. He says something. Positive about God. Finally.

He says. God. You. Snatched me. From the jaws. Of death. This is the first thing. He said really. That I don't take issue with. Yes. You threw yourself.

To your death. By convincing these men. To throw you overboard. But then God. Snatched you. From the jaws. Of death. Because God. Has power. Over death.

[25 : 23] It's a little bit personal. But. Before I was ever born. My grandmother. Tried to commit suicide. With a gun.

And. What she did. 99. 999 times. Out of a thousand. It would have ended her life. Life. But God. God chose. To not let her. End her life. That day. He kept her alive. For a long time. My parents. Were able to go visit her. They were married at the time. I don't think they had any kids yet. But they were married. Able to go visit her. Share the gospel with her. God wasn't ready. For her life. To be over. God. And she said these words.

As one of her last words. That she said on this earth. Now I know. That you can never be happy. Without Jesus. God had some things. He wanted to reveal to her yet.

[26 : 19] God holds the keys. To life. And death. You can try. To fight against that. But God's plan. Always wins. God's plan.

Always wins. Verse 7. As my life was slipping away. Jonah says. I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer. Went out to you. In your holy temple.

There he is again. Equating God. With the temple. Saying God is over here. At the temple. But what do we see. From verse 7. Jonah waited. Until the last second. To remember. God.

Quote on quote. Likely because of his shallow. Temple based view. Of God. He didn't have this great. Grand view of God. Trying to wrap his human mind. Around how great God is.

Like we all do. Because none of us. Can completely understand God. Or fit him into a little box. It won't be accurate. And Jonah was no different. But he wasn't even trying. To understand the God of the Bible.

[27 : 15] He had figured out. God is how I want him to be. He is in this little box. In Jonah's mind. He's back here at the temple. And he sends me on missions. If he wants to.

But I didn't want that mission. So I'm running away. And maybe God won't be able to find me. Right? But now finally. In verse 7. As his life was slipping away. He's drowning under the water. He finally remembers God. Don't wait until the last second. To remember God. Folks. We have the opportunity.

To remember God now. We have the opportunity. To remember God. When we go to bed.

Remember God. When we wake up. Remember God. Remember God. At our meal time.

Remember God. Families. As you. Right before you put your kids in bed.

And maybe have a family altar. Or family devotional time. That has some prayer. And maybe you sing a song together. Or read a verse of scripture. Or something that brings our minds back to God. We can remember God anytime.

[28 : 10] And when we do. When we turn our minds to God. That is the highest thought that our human mind can have. And it is what God uses and blesses. And then God can work in your life.

If you remember him. But if you tune him out. If you block him out. If you say la la la la. I know God saved me from sin. But I'm not going to remember him in my days.

Then you end up like Jonah. Falling through the water. Of life. And finally. You remember God. And what does God do?

He saves. But before we get to the good part. Jonah is still not quite ready. Verse 8. Those who worship false gods.

Turn their backs. On all God's mercies. But I. Will offer sacrifices to you. Jonah still. sees.

[29 : 08] Other people's sins. As worse. Than his. Jonah still. Sees. Everybody else. Is worse. Than I am. These heathens.

Out there. In Nineveh. They wouldn't know. To turn to you. And worship you. But I do. Well buddy. You're the problem. Right now. Right? Nineveh. Is the one.

That God wants to save. And God wanted to use you to do it. But you. Resisted. You ran. Jonah never. Admits. His. Fault.

And then in verse nine. He talks about this sacrifice. I will offer sacrifices to you. With songs of praise. The only sacrifice God wanted.

Was obedience. Reminds me so much. Of the story of Cain and Abel. God asked for a very specific sacrifice. And Abel gave that to him.

[30 : 07] But Cain. Wanted to do it his way. Cain gave him. His version. Of the sacrifice. That doesn't work with God. Obedience.

Is what works with God. You and I. Do not get to pick and choose. How we're going to obey God. We just have to obey. He's given us this book.

He's given us the guidebook to life. He's given us all we need for life. And practice. In this book. We have to obey it.

We don't get to say. Well I know the Bible says this. But I think it's better if we do this. We don't get to say. I understand that the Bible says this. But you see. This is how I like things done.

We don't get to do that. Jonah tried to do that. Didn't work out for him. Did it? God's plan. Always wins. I just hope we get to be a part of it.

[31 : 04] I hope you get to be a part of it. I hope I get to be a part of it. Hope my kids get to be a part of it. It's a heart issue. It was always a heart issue. With Jonah. The only sacrifice God wanted from Jonah.

Was obedience. Would you turn with me over to Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. We're going to read just a few verses there. Matthew 12 and verse 38.

For sake of time. I'll go ahead and start reading. Jesus talks about Jonah. Jesus talks specifically about the prophet Jonah.

Verse 38 down through verse 41. One day some teachers of religious law and the Pharisees. Came to Jesus and said. Teacher. We want you to show us a miraculous sign.

To prove your authority. They were always trying to trip Jesus up. Trying to catch him. Trying to catch him in some. Breaking the law. The religious law of some way. That they could discredit him.

[32 : 01] Blaspheme him. Maybe even have him arrested. They hated Jesus. Verse 39. But Jesus replied. Only an evil adulterous generation. Would demand a miraculous sign.

But the only sign. I will give them. Is the sign of the prophet. What does it say? Jonah. For as Jonah.

Was in the belly of the great fish. For three days and three nights. So will the son of man. Be in the heart of the earth. For three days and three nights. He keeps going. So there's a little sneak preview.

To the end of the story of Jonah. If you weren't sure what happened. Verse 41. The people of Nineveh. Will stand up against this generation. On judgment day. And condemn it.

For they repented of their sins. At the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah. Is here. Jesus. But you refuse. To repent.

[32 : 58] So he talks about. The sign. Of the prophet. Jonah. What is the sign of Jonah? You look at this story. God calls.

Jonah runs. Jonah throws himself in the water. God brings the fish. Jonah says. Okay. I'll do it. He goes to Nineveh. He preaches. The city repents.

Jonah hates it. Spoiler alert. God. Is working. All through this whole story.

And the sign. Of the prophet. Of Jonah. Jonah. Is that Jesus. Is better. Jesus. Is greater. Than Jonah.

Jesus kind of tips it. At the end. Someone greater than Jonah. Is here. But you refuse. To repent. So the whole point was. Jonah. Had a relationship.

[33 : 54] With God. The one true God. But he refused. To repent. Of his own sin. Then. He goes to Nineveh. Of these evil wicked people.

He preaches to them. Do they refuse to repent? Oh no. They repent. We'll get to that. In a couple weeks. But these people. That Jesus.

Is then preaching to. When we see in Matthew. He's saying. You. Are worse. Than the people of Nineveh. Because. They repented. And you won't. Jesus himself. Someone greater than Jonah. Is here. And you. Will not repent. You won't see it. You refuse. To see the truth. Very much. Like Jonah did.

Because the truth is. Jonah. Just. Would not. Repent. He would not see. His own sin. He had a.

[34 : 50] Jonah sized blind spot. In his mind. So. Two lies and a truth. Lie number one. God threw me in the ocean.

How does that apply to us? You can take. Through me in the ocean. And you can fill in that blank. With something else. Whatever it is. That you blame God for. Whatever happened.

In your life. That you say. God didn't have to let that happen to me. God threw me in the ocean. No. No. No. Things happen. And God allows them to happen. Sometimes.

Of our own causing. Or sometimes. God allows us. To go through something. That in turn. Is going to be better for us. Than if we didn't go through it. And that's hard for us.

To wrap our heads around. But we don't have to try. To understand it all. We just have to put one foot. In front of the other. And follow Jesus. One step at a time. Even through the valley. Even through the dark times.

[35 : 46] The good shepherd. Leads his good. His dear children along. God is always leading. But if we fight against him. If we try to run away. Then we go through hardship.

We go through things. That he never planned for us. To go through. And then those burdens. That would have been just heavy enough. For us to carry. Become much heavier.

Then it seems like we can't stand it anymore. And then God reaches down. And tries to pick us up again. And say hey. Get back on the road with me. Get back on the path with me.

So he says God threw me in the ocean. And you might have something else. That you're blaming God for. But that's a lie. It's a lie. Don't believe the lie. And then number two. God drove me away. Say oh God just won't listen to me anymore. He won't hear my prayers. God doesn't care about me. He doesn't bless me. God pushes me away. That's a lie. God is always there. He always loves. He proved his love.

[36 : 45] On the cross of Calvary. When he gave his own life for us. What else would he withhold? He gave all he had. He will hold back nothing from us.

He only wants what is good for us. Because that is how he gets the glory. That's how he is glorified. The fact is.

Jonah never repented. Jonah never repented. Repentance is godly. Turning from something. In your mind. Recognizing. I have been wrong. I will now turn toward God. That is something we must all do. First we must do it from our sin.

You might be in this room. And you might have been in church for a while. Or maybe it's your first time in a long time. But it might be the day for you to repent of your sin. And say God forgive me. I need to become your child.

[37 : 42] I need your forgiveness. I need your healing. I need your cleansing. And for the first time in your life. You say I turn from my sin. And I turn to Jesus. I'm giving up. I'm surrendering. God save me.

Maybe today is the day for you to do that. Or maybe today is the day for you to repent. From something that you did yesterday. Something you did today. Or maybe a bitterness that you've been harboring in your heart for a long time.

And say God I repent. I turn back to you. You've already saved me. I'm already your child. But I know that I turn away from you time and time again. God forgive me. Jonah never repented. Don't be like Jonah. Don't be like Jonah. Repent. If it's been a long time. Repent today. Don't go another day. Your family will thank you.

Your friends will thank you. People in your life will thank you. Time and time again. We cause trouble for everybody else. When we don't repent and turn to God.

[38 : 43] Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Great German theologian said repentance is ultimate honesty. Repentance is ultimate honesty. That's the problem with Jonah.

He would never be honest about himself. And you see the dishonesty all throughout his prayer. God you did this. God you did this. You caused this. You threw me in. You pushed me away.

Oh no no no. He had to repent. In order to be honest. About himself. And about God. So what can we learn.

From Jonah chapter 2. We can learn the one truth. That's in this passage. We saw the lies. But there was a truth. That our God saves.

In spite of us. In spite of our dishonesty. In spite of our lack of repentance. Our God still saves. You saw it in verse 2. Verse 6. Verses 8, 9, and 10.

[39 : 40] We saw that God still saves. In spite of Jonah. And guess what? God still saves. In spite of me. Time and time again. I've pushed back against God.

I've tried to run away from God. And God brought me back. And he saved me again. Anyway. He saved me from whatever trouble. I was running toward. He saved me from whatever heartbreak. He was trying to keep me from.

But I had to repent. I had to repent. Or the saving couldn't happen. Now once for all. He died. He died for our sins. And once for all. He can forgive your sins. And once for all.

He can save you. From an eternal destiny in hell. But while we're walking on this earth. His salvation is still there. For the taking. His salvation is still there. To keep you on the path.

That he wants you on. To keep you. From that darkness. That he's trying to. Protect you from. So our God still saves. Sometimes God's salvation.

[40 : 35] Might look like whale vomit. I had to put that up there. Because I thought that was just a great little illustration of that there. Sometimes God's salvation might look like whale vomit.

Jonah 2.10. The Lord ordered the fish. The fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach. All right. God's saving might not be the prettiest. Most comfortable thing that ever happened.

For in your life. But it'll still rescue you. It'll still save you. It'll still get you back. To where God wants you to be. And then God can use you.

He can take you from there. He can clean you up. He can put you back together. And he can get you back doing. What he wants you to do. So our takeaway for today. Self-deception. Keeps us. From real change.

You might need some change in your life. Might be something that you need to change. There might be a habit. There might be a past. Might be a friend.

[41 : 35] Might be a relationship. Might be an addiction. I don't know what it is about you. There might be a spirit. That you carry with you.

And everybody else sees it except you. There might be something that you need to change. That I need to change. Do you know what's keeping us from it? Self-deception. We're lying to ourselves just like Jonah did.

We're lying about God just like Jonah did. God keep us from self-deception. Help us to see you as you. Help us to see ourselves as you see us.

And see you as we're meant to see you from the scriptures. Would you bow your heads and pray with me? God we're learning from the book of Jonah. Jonah. It's easy to remember this story. The whale and all these fascinating events that happened as we read them in scripture.

But God there's so much more to it. This prayer was so self-centered. It was so self-focused. It was so full of deception and dishonesty. And God we see why Jonah was so troubled.

[42 : 34] Because he just didn't have an accurate view of himself. He didn't have an accurate view of God. God let us not be like that. Let us learn from this story.

And if there's a man or a woman or a child sitting in this room today. Who's been lying to themselves. God let self-deception lose in the battle against your spirit.

With our heads bowed and eyes closed church. Let me ask you this question. There's somebody here today. I gave the call for it just a moment ago. There's somebody here today with your heads bowed. But you'd be willing to slip your hand up and say.

Today is the day of salvation for me. I need to repent of my sins and put my faith in Jesus to save me. Would you slip your hand up right now and I'll pray for you. If that's you.

Thank you. Thank you. Say today is the day I've been putting it off. I'm not going to put it off any longer. I'm going to repent of my sins. I'm going to turn to Jesus. Thank you. How many of you would say there's something else that I need God to save me from.

[43 : 38] He saved me from my sins. I've been his child for a while. But I need God to save me from something else in my life. Would you just pray for me. Slip your hand up and I'll pray for you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. God sees it. Thank you. How many of you would say there's something in my life I need to repent of. I've been deceiving myself and I need God to change me.

I need God to change me. I'm going to be honest about this. Would you slip your hand up and I'll pray for you as well. Thank you. Thank you. God you see these hands but more importantly you know what's going on in our minds and our hearts.

I pray that your spirit would work freely in this moment. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. Jared's going to lead us in Jesus paid it all again.

Just kind of slow it down. Let it be a time of reflection. If you'd like to sing along you can keep your seat. If you'd like to sing along go ahead. If you'd like to just pray right now go ahead. I'm going to be in the back of the room.

[44 : 37] If somebody would like to step back there and pray with me. I'd love to meet you back there. Talk over whatever else is going on. There's other people. If I'm busy there's other people I can grab to say. Hey would you pray with this person.

Just come on back to the back if you need some prayer. Otherwise Jared's going to lead us in this song. Jesus paid it all. We can surrender it all to him.