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Jonah - Power of a Parable

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Message Given: Sep 25th 2017

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home. So guess what we're talking about today? Jonah! Man, we're talking about Jonah a lot. It's just a short book. How many of you guys

have went back and actually read through the whole book again ever since we started the series? It's fascinating because we get so familiar with the story just watching it on TV or reading the books to our children that have you seen some stuff that you never saw before in the story that may have been like, wow, this is very mature story. Not mature content per se, but there's no way a child could ever really process the full extent of the weight of what's going on in this story. And that's been my experience through the study over the past few months and a while back when I started this study and kind of dropped off on it and just picked it back up. So we're kind of picking up where we left off with Jonah. We know that Jonah was on a boat and Jonah decided to run the opposite direction, away from the presence of the Lord. The same phrase that's used with Cain when Cain is exiled from God's presence, just an interesting side tidbit. And he runs, instead of going over here to Nineveh, he decides to run opposite direction over here to Tarshish. The farthest he could possibly go in the known world away from where God wanted him to be. And we already read the end of the book. We know why. He doesn't want God's love and the redemptive power of God's mercy to manifest itself in the people that he hates, the Assyrian people of Nineveh. Jonah imagines a world that is wonderful, and it's God's world, and it's where God is king, and it's where God does his stuff, but that world suits him just fine if Nineveh was not in it. No. And so Jonah decides to run from God and try to go to Tarshish, the place where God is forgotten, as we talked about in Isaiah last week. And we know the book is about a rebellious... religious hypocrite, if you will. That's what the story kind of paints for us. And he thinks he's faithful. He thinks that, you know, I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord. And he makes these claims in front of the pagans, and yet the pagans are the ones praying and crying out to God and saying, thank you, God, and offering vows to God and thanksgiving offerings to God. And Jonah's still over here, and he hasn't even prayed yet in the story. This uber-righteous man who thinks essentially that he's better than everyone else, if I can say that. And so we ended last week's message when Jonah was awakened on the boat by all of the pagan sailors. And, of course, as we just said, all the pagan sailors prayed and they made vows to God. And long story short, Jonah is tossed or hurled over the boat. Everybody say hurled. Hurl, it's a fun word. Hurled. We're going to talk about hurled. We're not going to talk about hurling. We're going to talk about hurled later on in today's message because it's interesting. That word only really appears in the Tanakh like 14 times, and four of those occurrences take place like in that chapter, chapter 1. And so I'm going to try to point out where does it take place else in Scripture, and is there a connection that the author is trying to tell us? And so we know that Jonah is tossed overboard, and the very last sentence in Jonah chapter 1 is, God made a great fish, this sea beast, sea creature, come up and swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights. And if the story ended right there, it would be... It would be kind of like, I was trying to think of movie examples because I love film, and the kosher movie example was Bambi. It'd kind of be like when you're watching Bambi. You guys ever seen Bambi? I actually went back and watched kind of the first scene where this takes place in Bambi's with his mom and your mom. Like, the mom's going to be leading him through life, and you're expecting this But you know Bambi's the main character, but his mom is obviously going to be in his life, training him up, loves him so very much, and leading him through. And this is how you, that's poison ivy. You don't eat that. This is how we do this. And then all of a sudden, she hears something. And she's like, Bambi, run. And you're like, all right. And she's running with Bambi, and they're together. And it's like, great. They're getting away from, here's some gunshots. It's all right. They're going to get away. Main character. And then there's a big shotgun. Boom. Walt Disney was just a genius when he painted this picture

because instantly, whether you're three or 90, you just start crying. You don't even know what's going on. What happened? Of course, Bambi's mom got shot. What if the story ended right there? If Jonah's story ended right here, it would kind of make the audience go, well, that wasn't a very good story at all, right? As we're going to see, the story does continue. and it's not the end for Jonah, and we find as soon as we turn the page, or actually continue the page because the book's so short, that Jonah is doing, he's inside the belly of the well, and not only did he not die in the narrative, he's there, well aware of himself, well aware of everything around him, and he's doing the exact thing that most of us would most likely be doing if we found ourselves sitting among the fish guts of and a very dark belly, probably not a very big belly. He's probably constricted, you know, smells. There's no oxygen. And he's writing a very intricate, complex Hebrew poem in the form of a prayer to God. I'm sure everybody can relate to that. But And it's fascinating because for the first time, you've heard me speak about putting glasses on and off for the story, right? When you've heard a story so many times, it's very difficult to, when you've heard a story so many times, you're familiar with it. And when you go back and read it, you don't read it as like, oh, well, of course he did. You know what I mean? Like we read it and it's like, yeah, that's part of the story. But it doesn't sound outlandish or it doesn't sound... bizarre or strange that this man is sitting in this well writing out a poem to God. And if you take those lenses off, imagine the very first, in ancient Israel when they were reading this story, how just, it's satire, right? Comic satire narrative, if you will.

How they're reading this and it's like, whatever, you know what I mean? Like, honestly, whatever, alright. So he's in the belly of the well and he's writing this poem and it's just trying to help us focus on something. But, That fits the storytelling style of the entire book, being a type of satire narrative. And so we know the author of Jonah. We don't know exactly who it was. Like I said before, I'm not going to hammer this too much. In part one, part two, we discussed this. That could be Jonah himself. Historical narrative, this is exactly what happened, and there's some pros and cons to going that direction. And if that's an opinion, that's a valid opinion among Christian academia and scholarship. And there's some pros and cons of that. And then, of course, the other big opinion, there's several of them, but the other big opinion is, of course, that it was a parable narrative. In other words, it was taking a real prophet and putting him in a parable in order to teach a lesson, to make an impact on our lives. And when I was thinking about that, I was like, where else do we see a lot of parables in Scripture? In the Gospels. Yeshua loved talking about some parables. And Yeshua did, if that's the case, on the story of Jonah, if it's a parable narrative, then Yeshua did the same thing. He would have parables and he would take real people and put them in the stories to try to make a point, a moral standing or religious point to his disciples. Lazarus and the rich man in Abraham's bosom, right? He named Lazarus. Obviously he was someone. Yeah, you know, Lazarus is some real guy. Right? and and in other parables tax collector in the Pharisee you know it's very bland as I wanted to show you guys the power love a parable and what the purpose and function other parable is when the the the reader reads it here's it and what it's supposed to happen as a result and so instead of explaining it let's just go through some examples so I have a couple of Yeshua's parables and can we read some things that Yeshua said awesome you don't have a choice Hearken. So in Mark chapter 4, Yeshua is telling the parable of the sower and the seed, right? And it sounds like a great story. And Yeshua started, Behold, there went out a sower to sow, and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, so he was throwing seeds, and some birds of the air came and devoured it all up, and some fell on stony ground, so he was sowing seeds, and some fell on the stones, where it didn't have too much dirt, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth,

But when the sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up around it and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And others fell on good ground and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased and brought forth some thirty, some sixty, some hundred. And he said unto them, If you have ears, let them hear. And he goes on, thankfully, to explain the parable. And essentially, starting in verse 14, he says, The sower sows the word, and so the seed is the word, the word of God going out, if you will. And these are the ones on the path that the word was sown, that when they hear it, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones that fell on rocky ground. The seed that's talking about people, rocky ground. And when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. Oh, yay! But it has no root, and it only endures for a little while. Then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the seed or the word being planted, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns, and these are the ones that hear the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth and the desire for other things come in and they choke the seed. They choke the word in their lives and it yields nothing. And these are the ones that are sown on good soil. They hear the word, they accept it, and they multiply, and they bear fruit, some 30, 60, and 100 fold. And so the purpose of this parable has nothing to do with stones in the ground or thorns, has nothing to do with a farmer, has nothing to do with the seed being spread. It has to do with you, and it has to do with God's presence in your life. And so the purpose of this parable, the power behind this parable, is intentionally to make the reader ask the question, which am I? Which are you? Are you good seed? Are you good ground, good soil? The word can manifest and grow up. Or do you have thorns in your life that choke it? Or stony ground? Has Satan... had a stronghold in your life that because your life is occupied on an area that's not devoted to God, it's the realm of the adversary, then the work of God can't work, never grows. So it's a very compelling parable. It's easier just to read it as a stupid story, right? That's a lot easier when you actually have to digest the manifestation of it being a parable. It's like, wow. That's really hard. That's a big deal. The mustard seed in Matthew 13, 31 through 32, shorter. He said another man before them saying, "...the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, sowed into a field, which indeed is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air, all of the creation around it, engages it, come and lodge in its branches." Of course, the kingdom of God, parables, the kingdom of God produces magnificent change and almost brings in a new creation. That creation itself responds to and is a part of the change. And it only takes a little bit of action, one little step forward to manifest, one step forward carrying the kingdom of God. A little bit of effort on your part in allowing God to fill the rest for this to happen. So it's a pretty big parable. Prodigal son, about a son who essentially runs off to the foreign lands because he wants to be like them. He wants to be like the foreign lands. So he goes to the foreign lands and he plays like the foreign lands and he does the things of the foreign lands. And then at some point, because of a famine, he is enslaved in that foreign land. He can't get out. He's in the pigsty. He can't get out until he prays for the father to accept him back at his house and And he's able to come home. It's a story about exile, if you will. And it's fascinating because the parable actually ends with the father arguing over the older brother who stayed in the land, if you will. And it says, you know, his father's arguing whether it's appropriate or be glad. And his father's saying, listen, you know, your brother was dead and now he is alive again. And it ends on that note, which is fascinating, because here we see that death doesn't have to be physical death. Death can be a separation from God, an exile away from him. And the glory of this is that the

son has repented, wishes to come back to his father's house, and his father is waiting and willing and actually takes on his son's shame by running through the city and gives him his sandals and his cloak. the mercy of God and how literally it is an infinite mercy that God has in his redemptive plan for everybody. I want to, last parable, it's a good one. I had to have something with some impact. Pete would love this one. The Good Samaritan. Another one that we've heard stories about as kids and I have a question. So why is it called the Good Samaritan? Why does it use that adjective, if you will? Good Samaritan. Why not just the Samaritan to help the guy out? Had to be the good Samaritan because there ain't many good Samaritans. Ain't a whole lot of, there's some history there. There's some bad blood between the Judeans and the Samaritans. And we know the story. A certain man came running down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And, of course, Yeshua is speaking to the lawyer that stood up and said, hey, what must I do to enter into the eternal age or the eternal life, if you will? And Yeshua said, what's written in the law? How do you read it? He said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your might, with all your soul, with all your strength, with your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Yeshua, you answered correctly. You got love. That's good. But just desiring to justify himself, that's an interesting phrase. He says, who's my neighbor? And so Yeshua has a parable waiting for him. This is a man walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. It's called the Way of the Blood, by the way, because there are so many robbers. It was a bad area. And he fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him, departed, and left him half dead. He's dying on the side of the road. And by chance, a certain priest was coming down that way when he saw him, a priest of God, and he passed by the other side of the road. And just, meh, I don't want to deal with that. And then a Levite comes. So a Levite, again, not a priest, but still working around the temple, manifest working, making sure, knows holy and profane, knows how to do the ways of God and the rights of God and the temple procedures. Sees the guy and walks to the other side of the road and passes him. But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, bound up his wounds, poured oil on him and wine, set him on his animal, brought him to a hotel, and took care of him. And on the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave it to the host, and said, Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return. And so Yeshua says, He says, Which of these three do you think seem to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers? And the guy can't even say Samaritan. Like, he can't even say the Samaritan. He says, the one who showed him mercy. That guy, you know, that one. Can't even bring himself to say the Samaritan. And then Yeshua says, go and do likewise. Now, the thing about Samaritans is Samaritans have a long history in Israel personally. Uh, they were essentially considered half breeds by the judeans because they were mixed during the exile and so on and so forth And they worshipped on a different mountain The samaritans did not come to jerusalem and they did not recognize The temple mount as the place of the temple and they didn't recognize the temple as valid They thought that mount gerizim up in israel was the place of god's true temple and that goes back to alexandria the great alexander the great and so on and so forth but regardless um And they would fight each other. And they would war with each other. And Samaritans were pretty much like The first century terrorists. They were insurgents of the land. So let me show you what happened around 9 AD here. Let's see, do I have it? Oh, I've got to do my sources. I forgot to go over. Before I get in trouble, I'll do all this. I'll show you who you can email if you have a problem with this message. So this is what Josephus talks about. And Josephus is awesome. He's a first century historian. And he writes down, this is what he says about the Samaritans. He says, in about 9 CE, the Common Era, when Judea

was administered by Coponius... So the custom was to leave the gates of the temple area open after midnight. And then, when the opening first occurred, Samaritan men coming into Jerusalem in secret began to scatter human bones in the porticos and throughout the temple. So the priests, who were not accustomed of such things before, managed the temple with greater care. In other words, they figured they'd open the doors up to the temple involving this rite of being open, and people are coming in to see God's presence. And the Samaritans snuck into the city with human remains hidden. And they snuck into the temple area, tossing a forearm here, toss a toe over there, toss a kneecap over here, whatever. Human bones in all the little areas of the temple. Human bones are unclean, right? In God's house. So they literally desecrated the temple courtyards with human remains. And if that wasn't enough, they chose to do it the week of Passover. Do you think that the Judeans liked the Samaritans? No. Samaritans did not like the Judeans. And this is a compelling parable because it asks the question, begs the question, who is your neighbor? Who is more righteous? The one who loves, if you will. And it also begs the question of who must you love on the flip side of it. And so are you willing to love your worst enemy? This is actually the story of Jonah. Jonah refused to facilitate God's mercy entering into Nineveh because he hated them, but are you willing to love and support? Would you do this for your worst enemy? Of course we would. We're good churchgoers and Christians. We love everybody because Jesus said to love ISIS, Al-Qaeda. Well, no, Matt, those are terrorists. Samaritans killed Judeans. Judeans killed Samaritans. Find you on the road. Yeah, but that's different. Would you be willing? Let's go into politics. Would you be willing to love on someone that's far, far left liberal in their political views. Yeah, but, I mean, they don't stand for the things of God. Worshipping on the wrong mountain. Sacrifices on the wrong... Doing the same things that Jeroboam did. Samaritans were doing in the first century. Yeah, but how about would you love on and show the mercy of God and the redemptive power of God to the far right in political arenas? Yeah, not them, because I don't disagree. I don't agree with them either, but... The parable is so powerful because it causes you to actually think, who am I unwilling to love? And if I'm truly a Yeshua follower, a Christ follower, if I'm truly following the footsteps, who was he unwilling to love? And so it's a very provoking parable, is it not? Parables provoke you to ask questions and put yourself in situations that you don't really feel comfortable doing, but they're always for the better so that you can audit your intentions and audit your walk with God. And so this is the power of a parable, if you will. If Jonah was written in parable narrative, then we should expect it to pack a huge punch with the content that it has inside, far beyond the limitations of a simple story about a guy who was mean and had a date with a fish and then was good. And I think we kind of discovered a lot of those punching bags last week, did we not? Just in the first chapter. And so we know that the story was written to ancient Hebrew-Israelite communities, right? And a lot of scholars think it was written post-exilic in the Persian era, writing back to the exiles as they went back to the land. It's one opinion. It's interesting. And so the writer of Jonah, whoever it may be, when he writes it and sends it out, what does he expect the original audience to see when they read it? What does he expect them to see? Well, how does it open up? The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai. Okay, so it's opening up, as we discussed last week, just like many other books of the what? What was Jonah? He was a prophet, right? A prophet. So it's opening up just like all the other books of the prophets, whether it be Isaiah says this, Ezekiel says this, Amos says this, so on and so forth. Book of the prophets. So they're expecting to read a book of the prophet, right? Right? And have you guys ever read the prophets? Some people are like, yes, I have. You want to know why? Yes, I have. Because that is an accomplishment. It truly is. The prophets are not

the easiest parts of Scripture to read. And I say that. And because they're a minefield of different stories and different scenarios. And in our day and age today with pick and choose, salad bar recipes, Bible perception that people have where you can just pick and choose verses out of here and there, the prophets become a minefield of distortion. And there's a lot of verses in the prophets that people will nitpick out, make cool bumper stickers, or that'd be a cool t-shirt out of, and rip it totally out of context. And that's for a different time. I was going to put a couple verses up, and I'm like, nah, it's too many. I've got people with bumper stickers on the car right now. But regardless... And when we read the prophets without realizing what they're about, then it makes for bad theology. And the thing about bad theology is it doesn't just make you look like an idiot. You're an ambassador, an emissary of God's kingdom. So an emissary is someone who represents the royal king. You're a messenger. It would have a seal. Haman had a seal of the king, right? Yes. Not a one. Good. Good. Haman had a seal from the king, which means wherever he went, he was the king's personality. He had the message of the king. He was walking out the will of the king in all he did. You are emissaries of Christ, is what Scripture says. And so when we take prophecies and we twist them to make either T-shirts or make stupid claims about stars in the sky... then it not only makes us look ignorant, it makes the integrity of the kingdom of God look, why would anyone want to be a part of that? And I bring that up, as you know, September 23rd, there's a lot of stuff going on tonight, and it's amazing because the first thing I did is I went to some Christian scholars, Dr. Faulkner over at answersingenesis.com is one of them, People with PhDs in astronomy, they might know something. And I wanted their opinions on all of this blabbing. I've known about the September 23, 2017 since, what, 2007 when we were discussing it and that one teaching, end-of-the-world teaching that had like five different astronomical signs that were going to happen, and this was like the last one of the teaching. And one by one, the other ones happened. And this was actually the one in that message that the world was going to, this was it. Like, Yeshua's coming back tonight. Right? And now it's just kind of been turned. Since all the other ones failed, this is it. This is the last one left. But I went, and it's fascinating to see accredited professors talk about how, guys, a bunch of people getting a freeware software like Stellarium, it's not always accurate. And this isn't accurate. The stars around, it's not accurate. These things are not accurate. Or taking a prophecy out of Jeremiah that is clearly about Yeshua saying, Messianic figure coming to earth and establishing the kingship of God on earth and rising up to overtake the dominions of the world. And in the process, reconciling, ending the exile from man and God and reconciling man back to God, which took place on the cross. This is what our king did. Taking these prophecies and taking one or two verses out and saying that, no, this represents a star in the sky and this represents a star in the sky. Guys, I've lived through the end of the world four times now. in this movement. I didn't even get a t-shirt. I'm still wanting my t-shirt. I haven't even gotten a t-shirt yet. And it's fascinating because every single time I knew, this is the end. There's no way. This is it. And you can go online. You can Google end times prediction dates. That never happened. There's a Wikipedia article that kind of, it's open source, but it tracks them all the way from like 63 AD. Hundreds of them. Tick, tick, These were dates that were confirmed with Scripture. This is going to happen. And guys, predicting a day when a sign of revelation or the tribulation or Yeshua is coming, predicting a day so far in the history of mankind has a 0% success rate. Zero. Now I bring that up. Should we be awake? Should we be watching? Sure, we can watch. We can do all these things. But I say that to say this, and this is my opinion. Everybody say this is your opinion. This is just my opinion. Ephesians 5, Paul speaks about what the bride of Messiah is going to look like. And this is the bride that Yeshua is coming back to walk down his aisle. My

opinion, you can read it. And he describes the bride of Yeshua being without blemish, without stain, radiant in her appearance, blameless, holy. And this is the queen that Messiah is allegorically going to walk down the aisle for his bride. I firmly believe that my generation is not that picture. I don't believe the generation past us is that picture. I don't think he's coming back for this generation. My opinion. We're not ready for him. Now, okay, it's an opinion. What about the next generation? Our children, our kids. They could be the generation that Yeshua comes back for. That'd be awesome. Wow. Imagine if that's the generation. But I believe, my opinion, that depends on how we raise them and the examples that we are to them. Because if the generation that was destined to die outside in the wilderness, outside the land, is just going to raise their children to be just like them, then why do we expect them to enter into the land? We have to be raising our children to be more focused than we are. We have to raise our children to be more dedicated than we are. We have to raise our children not to be looking around at everything else, but to be focusing on their vocation to be an image bearer of God and to walk as Yeshua did and to be the body of Yeshua without hindrance, going down the narrow path, without being distracted. Maybe, maybe that'll be the generation that crosses over. That'll be the generation that is the bride of Messiah. They are watching us. They are watching what we do. My son was down here, made me cry because he saw me raising my hands during worship, and he raised both of his hands up, watching me. Your children are watching you. Your little kids are watching you. Your teenagers are watching you. What is the example that they are seeing that they perceive as representing the kingdom of God? What are the things that you put your energy into when you open the Bible? What are the things that you put your energy into as you walk out the door, as you welcome Shabbat? When you pray with them, what are the things that you say? Are they seeing someone that is trying to keep a standard of integrity, that is trying to keep a standard of holiness, of righteousness? to go out and be the reflection of the image of God, be the reflection of Yeshua to the world like we were commanded to be? Or are they getting scared because the world's going to end and maybe they need to get some guns and they need to learn how to use them and they need to learn how to dig a hole and make a fire and they need to learn how to protect themselves? Don't get me wrong, guys. You come to our house. I'll show you my little, what people would call the end of the world prep closet. We are good to go. but I'm not preparing for the end of the world like that. Preparing the end of the world with prayer, with prayer. And so I ask you for the sake of our children to audit the example that you are leaving them. When they look at you and they think of my mom and dad are in God's kingdom, they're a believer, what is the picture that they have in their mind? Is it what Paul says in Ephesians 5? That was totally off topic. Um, But I care about my children. I care about my son. I care about our community's children, which is why I say such things as this. So, the prophets. All of the prophets in the Bible generally have a solid theme that's very similar to one another. For the most part, they're telling the story about Israel and how Israel's sin has overtaken their faith in God. and how they have become a rebellious, idol-worshipping, selfish people that have turned their backs to God. And the prophets tell Israel, they tell Israel, listen, something is going to happen as a consequence for you turning your back to God. And the consequence that is going to happen is exile. Assyria is going to come, Babylon is going to come, and you will be exiled away from the temple of God, from Jerusalem, from your land, and you will be taken to a faraway land. And, of course, several prophets emphasize to the northern tribes and several to the southern tribes and so on and so forth. But the prophets also tell about how God plans for a restoration and a commitment to his covenant for his people on that is greater than their rebellion that put them away from his presence in the first place and he talks about the mighty plan that

he has where his redemptive work will be poured out no matter what and he will bring them back he will preserve a remnant he will bring them back on the other side and plant them back in his presence and they will be reconciled with them And then some prophets, especially Isaiah, go on to speak about a future new creation where his presence will engulf the entire world and there will be a new heavens and a new earth. Older things, former things will no longer be remembered and so on and so forth. And so that's the general theme of the prophets of Israel. Where is the book of Jonah found? So we've got Hosea, one of the old prophets. We have Joel, Amos, Obadiah. All prophets, right? Prophets, minor prophets there. Then you have Jonah, followed by little one Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, so on and so forth. Right smack in the middle of all of the other prophets. And every single book that is telling this story about Israel. And here comes Jonah, a story about a guy. The only book of the Bible, the only book that is a story about a prophet. And it has nothing to do seemingly with Israel. It has to do with the pagans of all things. It has to do with the Ninevites. And it's fascinating because there's no mention of exile. There's no mention of new creation. So do we have a problem? The book is extremely different when contrasted to every single book that's around it. In our canonized Bibles, we actually make it a part of the minor prophets. It's a part of the minor prophets. Why? Why? if it does not have any reference to anything else that every single other prophetic book has in it about Israel's rebellion, the consequences of their sin, God's restoration, if that's not in the story about a guy on a fish, then why do we consider it a book of prophecy? Why is it included into the minor prophets? Am I scaring some of you? A couple of you are looking at me like, you're not going to say that. Should the book be included among the prophets in our Bible? Or for that, I feel like maybe we should revisit some of the prophets, just a few, to see if we can discover what Jonah is about and what the core is about. And if there is a deeper message, just like we've been saying, I think I've already done a spoiler alert on this, the last two messages, is there a deeper message that we can find out to answer this question? It's a valid question, is it not? Should we question these things? Hosea chapter 8 is a great, great, many of us in the movement are very familiar with Hosea. Amen? Very familiar. And Hosea is speaking about exile. Exile. And it says this, They make their silver and gold into idols for themselves, Jeremiah 10 and Habakkuk 2, 17 through 19 says, for their own destruction. So we have Israel here, and they're setting up these kings, not through God, they're not anointed through God, setting up leaders, and the northern tribes are setting up priests. That was the great sin of Jeroboam. priesthoods that are not of God, and they're turning their backs to God. And he's saying, you're doing this to your, you are leading yourself into your own destruction. And then when we go to verse 8, Israel is swallowed up. Now they are among the nations. like discarded pottery. For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey going off on its own. Ephraim has paid for love. It's like prostitute language. Has paid for love, even though they hire lovers among the nations. I will now round them up, and they will begin to decrease in number under the burden of the kings and the leaders. And so a great nation is going to come as a result of Israel's sin and rebellion and disobedience against God, and Israel is going to be swallowed up by this nation. And Hosea is, of course, one of the earliest prophets, and it's amazing because when we look to other prophets, we see them kind of piggybacking on this language, and the Lord's giving them the same language to use elsewhere. And how about the Psalms? We don't really think of the Psalms being prophetic, but we know there's a lot of them. Psalm 22, good gracious. We know there's a lot of prophetic Psalms in the Bible. And so the Psalms was a book written by David, by Solomon, by Esau, by the sons of Korah, and several other people as well. And many Psalms were written before the exile. right? The time of David's on and so forth. It's before the exile.

But there are some Psalms that were written after the exile, the Babylonian exile, kind of looking back and talking about what did happen. And one of those Psalms is Psalms 124. You want to read it? I got the clicker. We're going to read it. If the Lord had not been on our side when men attacked us, then they would have swallowed us alive in their burning anger against us. Then the waters would have engulfed us. The torrent would have swept over us. The raging waters would have swept over us. So this image of something's going to swallow them up and then the waves are going to crash over them and they're going to be pulled under the water in this thing. But God was with them and so they were saved from being kept under the water and the waves crashing over, but God pulled them out because this is after the exile, right? How about Jeremiah? Jeremiah chapter 50, 34 says, This is possibly the most compelling example. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has devoured me. He has crushed me and made me an empty vessel. He has swallowed me like a sea monster. It's the word *tanim*. It's the same word that's used in Genesis 121 for the great sea monster that was made in the seas. Swallowed me like a sea monster. He has filled his belly with my delicacies and has vomited me out or thrown me up. Even the terminology around Jonah, used in Jonah, is fascinating. And when I was talking about hurl or hurling, so hurl is used four times in Jonah. Do I have a slide? Did I make a slide for it? Yeah, and Jonah 1.4, 1.5, 1.12, and 1.15. And of course, you know, but the Lord hurled a powerful wind into the sea, causing a violent storm. Or the very next verse, again, using this word, that the sailors hurled the cargo that was on the ship into the sea. Or a couple verses later in the same chapter, verse 12, and he said, pick me up and hurl me into the sea. So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea. And you just have this It doesn't seem out of place when you're reading it, but when you look at how many times this word is actually used in the Tanakh, I think it's 13 or 14, it's like 28% of it is used right here in this chapter. And it should be an indicator. And so we have a couple other areas in the Prophets Same words used when the spear was hurled at David and stuff like that. But in the prophets where the word appears, it's fascinating because every single time it appears in like Jeremiah or Isaiah, at least in these examples, it's speaking about one thing and one thing over, and that's the exile and how God is going to hurl Israel out of the land. So Jeremiah 16, 13, "Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that is neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, and I will show you no favor." Or 22, 26, I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country. Well, you were not born, and there you will die. 22, 28, and the man Keniah, a despised and broken pot, a vessel no one cares for. Why are he and his children hurled and cast into a land that they don't know? 22, 17, beware, the Lord is about to take firm hold on you and hurl you away, you mighty man. He will roll you up tightly like a ball. and throw you into a large country. There you will die, and there the chariots you are so proud of. So proud of our army. There your chariots you are so proud of will become a disgrace to your master's house. And I just find these connections interesting. Are they at least interesting, right? I didn't realize these themes were across the other prophets. And so we ask the question again to this Valid question, does Jonah really belong in the book of the prophets if it doesn't carry a single theme? If it's really just a kid's story about a big fish and a guy, does Jonah have the same theme as the rest of the prophets have? A message of repentance for Israel concerning their disobedience, their rebellion, their exile, and hopeful future? I believe it does. And I believe that that shouldn't be lost simply because the story of Jonah is the only prophetic word that is told in a different format. As a story, as a narrative about a prophet instead of the prophetic words of a prophet, right? Prophetic. And so we come to this week's message, Jonah chapter 2. And we find Jonah is in a place and he's swallowed up by the results of his own decisions

and his own ways of thinking and the steps that he took away from God. Everything has come to a point. He is facing Sheol and he is literally looking death down the mouth, like in the face, and and he begins to pray. And I think, is this the first time that Jonah prays in the book? I know the first prayer to take place in the whole book of Jonah was from the pagan sailors. And so this chapter, chapter 2, if you turn there, we'll read it together. Chapter 2 shows us how to pray through situations we find ourselves in in life, and not necessarily situations that we brought on because of our own sin. But how many of you guys know that... that we can be swallowed up in the belly of a well because of someone else's decisions, right? Several of the prophets experienced exile to Babylon, not based on their own righteousness. I mean, Daniel's a pretty nice guy. He's a pretty outstanding fellow right there. Carried away to Babylon. Because of the decisions of the people that he was with. Because of the decisions of Judah as a whole. Now he has to bear the swallowing up of Nebuchadnezzar. And he has to go down and overtaken with the waters as well. And I had another teacher I was listening to who brought up a great point about Joseph. Joseph, it wasn't because of Joseph's decisions that he found himself in a pit, mercifully spared from death. Found himself in a pit to be sold into slavery, to live a life exiled from his family, but still maintaining his focus on God, praying to God. It's fascinating. And so this is a prayer, and it's written not to be a personal prayer to Jonah, and that's what I kind of want to impress today. It's written as an outline, I believe, because the book was not just some guy's diary. This was written to a people. It was written to ancient Judea, and as a result, to you now today. And so I see this prayer, and I want to impress on you that this prayer in Jonah chapter 2 is a workflow, if you will, a procedure of how we are to handle hard times. And I would submit that this is an invaluable lesson, weapon that we can use in times where we truly do feel that we are at the bottom of the ocean. And so we're going to read this ancient prayer. And I want you guys to look at this as not just a story now, an ancient prayer and a subscription or prescription, if you will. And we're going to read this. And I encourage you that no matter what your situation is today, if you believe that you're going through a time of Jonah in the whale, that you would apply your situation to this prayer. Whether you're going through a situation caused by your own doing, which we do, or maybe caused by someone else, or maybe you don't know why you're going through a certain situation in your life. Anyone ever been through that before? Be real. I want you to try to picture yourself and your situation in this chapter. And we'll just... I invite you to read along and even pray. If you can do that right now, just pray with this prayer. And so I don't think I had, yeah, I don't think I have the actual Jonah chapter 2 up there. So I'm going to read it, and if you have it in your Bibles, you can follow along. And it's a short chapter, like a paragraph or two. And it starts off, Jonah is now in the belly of this well, unable to move. He's stuck, consumed, in darkness, trapped. And he says, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside, or the belly of the fish. And he says, I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me. I cried out for help in the belly of Sheol. You heard my voice. Now, the first thing that I want to show you here is how the prayer starts. We see here that in his distress, Jonah literally cried out to God. He cried out to God. I called to the Lord and my son, God, God. He literally cried out to God in his distress. How many of you guys have ever cried out to God in distress? Like maybe a car accident or something happened or something with your family. I had an incident the other day that happened that had me calling out to God. And many of you know I love to play with fire. And the fire that I was playing with since we live in Fort Mill or near Fort Mill is the Puckerbutt Pepper Company Carolina Reapers. And you can buy the tincture, which is the concentrated form of the Carolina Reaper, and one drop in your tongue... You're done, right? And so I was taking crackers and putting a drop on the cheese, and it was nice

with the dairy. It's nice and, yeah, manly, right? And long story short, there was an accident with the bottle, and it spilled out on the counter, and it soaked some of the crackers. So this was not one, two, three drops of this hot fire, right, which I think I had draped in up to three in New York, and that was, a cracker was soaked. And I'm sitting here thinking, I'll put a little bit of dairy on it, and it'll be fine. So I put a little bit of dairy on it, and I eat the cracker that is soaked in the concentrate of Carolina Reaper and some other peppers, the sauce, and I eat it. And I'm good, like I am. And Jenny's in there, like she doesn't know what I just did. She's like, what are you doing? Why are you being so dramatic? I'm like, I'm not. okay. I sip some milk, and after about 20 minutes of stuff coming out of everywhere, I'm good. Long story short, 40 minutes later, a pain began to arise in my stomach, and something I didn't know about at the time, there's something called a capsaicin cramp. Anybody ever heard of this? So it's when your stomach thinks that you're being, that it's being poisoned, and it begins to have these cramps. Now, the peppers are not poisonous. They're not bad for you in a way. You wasn't being poisoned, but your stomach, with that, my stomach began to, so I ran in the room, bathroom. I don't need to throw up or anything else. It's just pain is getting worse and worse in my stomach, and I literally thought I was dying. It felt like it was not coming up or out. It was coming out. It felt like, guys, I was trying to remember if the spider thing crawled on my face and planted an egg because there was something about to pop out of my stomach. Right? I mean, that's what it felt like. That's what it felt like. And I am on the bed, and I'm sweating, and I'm screaming, and I'm in fetal position, just, just, oh! And Jenny's in the other room, and I am crying out to God because I literally, guys, I literally thought I was dying. Literally thought I was dying. God! make it stop. And my wife, she's been to the hospital with me a few times recently, and she knew. She walked in there, what, your stomach hurting? And I'm just like sweating. My hands were going numb. And it was the first time in my entire life that I ever told my wife to call 911. This is how bad it was. And my wife went back to the kitchen table and sat down and muttered some words like stupid idiot and continued to work on her things. Luckily, she came to my rescue and She came in. I thought she was going to take me to the hospital. She had a glass of milk and this capsule of activated charcoal. And she's like, here you go. What is that? And then I drank it, and she threw me an ice pack. It went away, and then I started researching what had happened, and it's a very common thing. And eat something before you eat peppers like that. But crying out for God. Now, we look back, and it's funny, but have you ever been in a situation where you legitimately I don't care who hears me. I don't care what they think in my prayer. God, please help me. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations, and I don't mean to make light of it with that story, and I don't know your situation and if you're even going through a situation, but sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where we're going to read was just like Jonah, being drug down to the bottoms of the seas, trapped in darkness, swallowed whole, no hope, no hope. There's nothing you can do. And the first thing that Jonah says is, is cry out to God. Because in those situations, it's so tempting to feel as if God has abandoned you. Anyone ever felt like that? I know, we're not supposed to admit that. Anyone ever felt that? God is not with me anymore, obviously. Right? That God is just ignoring you, that God is nowhere to be found, or else he'd stop this, or something like that. Our mind gets very, on how we think God should operate, and it's looking in the past, it's like, so selfish the way I think sometimes. But here, Jonah makes a different assertion. He says that God is right here. In the belly of Sheol. He says that I'm in the belly of the realm of the dead. I'm death. I ain't coming back from this. But yet God is still with me here. And he draws the opposite conclusion that many of us might. Jonah seems to present a new reality to anyone reading this prayer, anyone that may be

experiencing a situation where they feel like they're closed in on all sides and there's no hope and they're trapped and they don't know what to do and God obviously has ignored them. He says, he asserts the scriptural reality that in those moments when you feel God is far off, it's precisely in those moments when God is the closest. He's right there. And we see in the next verse that Jonah's going to elaborate this thought of him realizing and seeing God more clearly than ever before, as opposed to the other moments in his life, when he isn't being digested by a giant fish. And so if you look in verse 3, he's crying out to God, and he's acknowledging what God has done in his life, especially that's led to this moment. He says, "...you threw," or you hurled me, "...into the depths, into the heart of the seas." Now, whose currents have overtaken him? God's. Whose waves? God's. Who hurled him into the depths of the sea? I mean, the last chapter, last week, who hurled him? Who tossed him overboard? God pick him up? No, it was the sailors. Hmm. Sometimes people get upset when we speak about God always being in control or orchestrating certain circumstances in our life. And what Jonah is coming to the realization of is that God was still there. And God wasn't surprised at anything that took place. In fact, God orchestrated this event for a specific reason. So he's acknowledging, yeah, God, you did cause this, even though through the vessels of the sailors and the circumstances of the sailors, they tossed me. You were still the orchestrator of this, and it's almost like he's finding comfort in this because you're still in control. Even though that happened, I'm acknowledging that that was you, but that also means that right now this is you too, even if I don't like it. I still have to admit that. And one thing that we tend to do as human beings when life gets very difficult, and I'm not talking about, you know, how am I going to pay my electric bill this month. I mean, that's a pretty bad situation. But I'm talking about when you are in the belly of the well, when there is no hope. We get anxious, and we get nervous, and what are we going to do, and what are we, how are we going to, what is the solution for this? And we forget that God is not sitting there around nervous like us. He's not sitting there nervous, you know, biting his nails. Oh, what are we going to do? God is not surprised by your situation or your circumstances, no matter how bad they may be. God is not sitting there freaking out like you are. And I find great comfort in that, great comfort in that. And it was not necessarily God that authored the calamity that led to Jonah being in the fish. That's something else we have to realize. And sometimes we dig our own hole and we jump in it and then get freaked out. It wasn't God that orchestrated Jonah to run from the land to Jaffa. It wasn't God that orchestrated Jonah to hop on the boat and go to Tarshish. It wasn't anything that had to do with God. It was Jonah. But God still had a plan throughout every situation and every pit stop and everything that happened. He still had a plan. And so you might not be in your situation because of anything you did, as I mentioned before, but God still has a plan, and he's still in control. And we always want God to be this magic genie. Anyone ever kind of raised in that culture, God's a magic genie, and like one of those magical fortune-teller machines, put 25 cents in, you get your wish? This is not the situation for Jonah. You know, we don't walk through life as a believer walking past every slot machine and just ting, ting, ting, 777 and blessings pour out. That's not the reality of what we have. But the reality of who God is in the Bible is a God that seeks to mold us as a people that he can say, these are the ones that represent my kingdom, my will, and my character. and that's the God of the Bible. We can nitpick verses out, and you'll be blessed with this, or you'll have joy with this, or floodgates of heaven, yeah! We can nitpick verses out, and we can ignore books like Ecclesiastes and Job, that's fine, but the God of the Bible is the God that seeks to pull you in as his people and mold you to represent his image. And sometimes that doesn't feel good, and sometimes it doesn't look like He's running after you

with good intentions. But I want you to look at Jonah, and as last week we were talking about the fierceness of God's love in the storm, where the boat needed counseling afterwards because it was like, I think I should tear apart, I don't know, you know. What God is doing with Jonah in this situation is, I heard one professor call it severe mercy. I like to call it fierce mercy, fierce love. When God's going to stop at nothing, nothing, to make sure that Jonah truly does have an opportunity to be molded to the image and fulfill the vocation that he was meant to fulfill as a prophet of God. God is not going to stop at anything if you have come into a covenant with him and said, I am yours and I accept the payment that you made for me and I am redeemed. You don't own yourself anymore. And if you find yourself running from God and you find your life getting harder and harder and harder and you don't understand why God is allowing these things to happen to you and you don't understand why the whale is swallowing you up and why you're taken down to the deep, it might be his fierce mercy. And just because it doesn't feel good doesn't mean that you're not experiencing the redemptive plan of God in your life. Lost my notes here. Verse 4. But I said, I have been banished from your sight, yet I will look once more towards your holy temple. Does that remind you of anybody?

Can I remind you of Daniel a little bit? Looking towards Jerusalem from Babylon? Exile language is what this is. Clear exile language. But in the context of the story, we'll keep it in the story narrative, Jonah is realizing that Tarshish, Tarshish was the place that forgets God, just like Isaiah speaks about. God is not known. And can you imagine, can you imagine if he had made it to Tarshish? How horrible would that have been? Even though I ran from you, I was banished from your sight, and I now know I want to return. How many of you guys have ever realized that the things that you want in life really are not the best things in life? And a lot of times it's the sin and the flesh in our life that drives us to pursue certain things in our life that we ought not to pursue, but man, that just looks great. Whatever that is, I want to pursue that because that will make my life better. That's some green grass over there. And when we jump the fence, there's always a price to pay. And we realize that the price that we had to pay to land us on this side of the fence was not worth it. Anybody, anybody, anybody. It wasn't worth it. This is horrible. Tarshish is horrible. I thought this was going to be great. I had a great cruise over here. The wind was in my hair, right? God is nowhere near me. I got this. This is my life. I am my, I'm taking over. I'm driving the boat. Let's go there. Paradise. What is the price that you have to pay to take on these things? And in Jonah's case, you know, a wind and a storm was sent to show him that. It's not going to be worth it for you, Jonah. I know I'm looking out for you. It's not going to be worth it for you. Man. Thank God for the circumstance of God intervening and sending the storm for Jonah. And then all of a sudden, here is the prayer, and Jonah is no longer facing Tarshish. It's significant. He's no longer. Yet I will look once more to your holy temple. See, Tarshish is west, away from Jerusalem, away from where the temple was, and now he's praying, and he says, I once again will look towards your presence and the place of your presence and where your presence dwells. And even though he thought he was running away from this strict, over-demanding God that wanted him to do this or do that, he realizes there at the bottom of the sea that this is the God of love and mercy chasing after him. Chasing after him. Imagine if the prodigal son was told a different way and the father chased his son down. Grabbed him. Thrown him to the ground. You are coming home. Why, Dad? Why? No. You're coming home. Throwing his money everywhere. No. You don't need this anymore. Why? Seems like a bad situation for the son, but it's an example of the father's fierce love for him, relentless in his pursuit. For you, getting what you want is not going to change the source of life in your life. That's God's role. He is everything, and he should be. Verse 5, the waters engulfed me to the neck, and the watery depths

overcame me, and seaweed wrapped around my head. Imagine just around your neck, and it's kind of creepy, like pulling you down. I sank to the foundations of the mountains or the roots of the mountains. Remember the theme last week? Down, down, down, down to the bottom. He's carrying on that theme. Not only is he down at the bottom of the boat now, now he's really down at the foundations. He can't go down anymore. The earth with its prison bars have closed behind me forever. Is there anything here that would make you feel? Let's just say the first time reading the story. Do you think that Jonah can come back from this? I mean, he's trapped. He's gone. The roots of the mountains. I never even see it. Mountains had roots. Bottom of the ocean, foundations of the mountains. What? The bottom. But you raised my life from the pit, Lord my God. As my life was fading away, I remembered Yahweh. My prayer came to you, to your holy temple. And so when Jonah was on the brink of death here, he remembers all the things that God had always shown him mercy and grace and thanks for, you know? And Jonah has this, like, it's no longer this negative Nancy encounter. He has this positive, like there's some light at the end of the tunnel here. Hold on, positive. And he has this positive experience of gratefulness towards God and of appreciating all that God has done for him. And he's thankful of God's love and God's mercy and that he's just relentless in his pursuit for his people. Where is he still? Sitting in this stomach of this fish. Praise you, God, for your love and mercy. It's like, what? He realizes that his own circumstances are not the indicator in which he should judge how God feels about him, which is a big deal, big deal. We look in one place and one place only to discover who God is for us. That's the thing that Jonah, I feel, discovers here. He once again discovers the vitality that God has for him as his prophet, as his people, as his image. I am not my own. I am not driving my own boat here. I'm not the captain of this bus driving around. I'm not in charge if I'm yours. Therefore, why am I trying to be in charge if I'm yours? If you're the source of life, if you're the source of mercy in my life, if you're the potter, then I can't also be the potter if I'm the clay in allowing you to mold me. And this is the epiphany that Jonah has in the whale in this moment in the story. And as believers, we have this example, and we know the example, and we know that who God is to us when we wake up in the morning, when we lie down. We know what the example of God's love is for us, and that is nothing but the life, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Yeshua. That is God to us in our life. Nothing else matters. Nothing else. The greener grass, tarshish, it does not matter. That is what we're about now. If you've made that commitment of faith, that's what you're about now. And this is something that Jonah's coming to the realization about. Those who cling, verse 8, those who cling to worthless idols, forsake faithful love, forfeit the only thing, or the faithful love, but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation is from the Lord. Those who cling to worthless idols and forsake faithful love. Wow. He's speaking about those who take for granted the one thing they have going for them. Don't you just sit here. Listen, anything else? It's a big, long message. Zoom in. Right there in verse 8. He's speaking about those who cling to worthless idols. Why is he talking about idols? Well, it's the very next line. Because they forsake the faithful love of God. How many times have we forsaken the faithful love of God in our life and turned to That's kind of, you know, it's really vague when you say that. Okay, how many times have we forsaken the faithful love and the mercy and the pursuit of God's fierce love in our life to turn to something else that we would rather give the authority that God gave mankind in the garden to reign and rule with his power and his authority and his kingdom? How many of us have ever taken that authority and given it to something else so that it could reign over us? That is what idolatry is. People get so wrapped up in idolatry of statues. Guys, if you're pointing your finger to every single church that has a statue in it,

pointing to them, they have idols in there. You are intentionally blinding yourself to the reality that you may have some big idols in your life and you're unwilling to recognize them because you think it's only statues. Anything that you have given the authority and the power over for you to serve. That's everything. That could be anything. That's what Yeshua came to defeat and empower us to overcome. Whether it's lust, how's that? Idol worship, because you're giving something over to control you, to enslave you. Gossip? Matt, come on, that's not, I just can't keep it shut. I feel good talking about other people to other people. The scale can go every which way. Those who cling to worthless idols because they forsake the faithful love of God. But as for me, I will sacrifice to you the voice of thanksgiving. Salvation is from the Lord.

So I can't tell you how this story, this chapter 2 of Jonah, is supposed to adapt to maybe a situation that's happening in your life today. I'm not even going to try. Or how it's supposed to fix your situation. But I can tell you what I believe. And I believe that this story has the ability to impact someone here today, That may be in a situation where they feel like the seaweed is around their neck, like it is pulling them down deep, like there is no hope. They're looking down the mouth of death, whether it's in their marriage or their family or their life or their faith. They're staring to the black abyss of the bottom of the earth. And I believe that this prayer that has been passed down for thousands of years and it's finally in your lap has a message in it that can at least instruct you a formula that apparently helped Jonah. And I believe it has the power to show us what we need to do in times of great distress to help us as well and teach us that God is with us. He's not surprised, still in control. Are we going to keep grabbing the steering wheel? Are we going to get on our knees and cry out and praise God in

the storm? As believers, we know that in these situations, um, And as believers, we sometimes, Paul talks a lot about the cross, and I'm always fascinated by that. Because he talks about the cross, and he talks about the resurrection too, but he's always talking about the cross and what happened on the cross. And the cross was the weapon used against the kingdom, but it was kind of like the Death Star ended up exploding back in the face of the Roman Empire and the world. And through the power of Yeshua and so on and so forth. And I look at that cross, and it reminds us, of course, of the suffering that Yeshua took upon himself as a vessel for God's fierce love to chase after you. And when we look at the cross, we realize that even though we may not be spared from the experiences and the situations that we encounter in our life, that swallow us up in our life, that drag us down, that overtake us in our lives, God can still use the circumstances to reveal the magnitude of his mercy in a way like no other. He always has a plan to produce his redemptive power. And I truly believe that that is the point, that is the summed up point of Jonah chapter two. And after Jonah prays this prayer, at the very end of the chapter, it says, then the Lord commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah out on dry land. Because Jonah realized at that moment, I got nothing. And I need to be molded to whatever you want me to be molded to. Father, mold me, create me, make me what you would want me to do in your image. Throwing up on the land, starts trekking to Nineveh, which we'll discuss maybe next time. Jonah 2. I hope that you marked that chapter in your Bible with a special bookmark because I've had to use it before. And possibly, maybe that's why it's in there because you may have to use it one day as well. And so I hope that this outlook was edifying. I hope that we've increased our apologetics a little bit on why Jonah should be in our Bible and what the message is behind it and why it is the divine word of God, even if it is written in a different type of narrative perhaps or as a story instead of a prophetic word. And I hope and I pray that that maybe at least some of you have realized that maybe the circumstances in your life are the result of God's fierce love for you, and that there is a redemptive plan on the other side, just like there was from Judah in

*Babylon, just like there was from Israel eventually, so on and so forth. Amen? Hey everybody,
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Hope you guys have a great week and we'll see you next time. Shalom.*

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