



## A PRAYER FROM A DEEP PLACE

Week #6; August 31, 2025



Presented by:  
**Solid Bread Community**  
Fort Collins, CO  
[www.solidbreadcommunity.com](http://www.solidbreadcommunity.com)

### Review:

- Last week, we studied **Jonah Ch. 1, vs. 17.**
- The entire lesson was focused on three key phrases within that single verse:
  - First, there is the phrase, “*the Lord provided* (and as we learned, some translations say ‘*appointed*,’ ‘*arranged*,’ or ‘*prepared*’)”
  - The second phrase is, “*a great fish*”
  - And then lastly, there is the phrase, “*Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights*”
- We learned some interesting things in that lesson. Among those....
  - The Hebrew phrase which is translated ‘*the Lord provided*’ is used several other times in the book of Jonah.
  - Each time, the context shows that God produced something - or He made something happen - that was unnatural or unexpected for the situation (For example: the supernatural storm the sailors encountered, the great fish that swallowed and preserved Jonah, and so on).
  - That compels us to realize that God is often at work behind the scenes – even miraculously sometimes - and most of the time we are unaware of that.
  - It doesn’t matter if we are running FROM Him or TO Him - - or if we are in conformity to His will, or if we are outside of His will.
  - **The truth is this:** God is infinitely greater than our personal choices and circumstances, and His desire is to bring us into a right relationship with Him.
  - As it was with Jonah, God cares a great deal about our obedience, wisdom, patience, and humility.
  - We also saw how Jonah’s incarceration in the great fish – and the duration of that - is a type or picture of Jesus Christ’s own physical death and burial.
  - As we learned, this doesn’t necessarily mean that Jonah also *died* - - and I shared that my own view is he did not.
  - However, Jonah was – at the very least – as good as dead, and I’m sure he thought his own demise was just a matter of time.
  - Be all that so, Jesus Christ, in **Matt. Ch. 12**, referred to Jonah’s confinement in the ‘*great fish*’ as a type or representation of His own forthcoming death.

- We learned a bunch of other interesting details from **Ch. 1:17**, and that lesson and its accompanying notes are available online for further study.

**NOTE:** This week, we proceed into Jonah's prayer. This prayer is essentially all of Chapter 2. I want to read this prayer in its entirety. Then we'll begin to unpack what we can learn from it.

## **A. SOME HIGH-ALTITUDE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT JONAH'S PRAYER**

### **1. First, this is a prayer of marvelous faith.**

**NOTE: It shows a huge contrast from everything we've seen in Jonah up to this point. It's a big turnaround for him.**

- Up to now, we've mostly seen a major compromise in Jonah's faith.
- We've seen that he knew the Scriptures well – Jonah therefore knew from **Ps. 139:7-10** that he could not escape God.
  - ✓ But in **Ch. 1:3** we read that he tried to *'flee from the Lord.'*
  - ✓ IMPORTANT: Knowing God's Word isn't sufficient by itself. Jonah knew the Scriptures well. He just chose not to apply what he knew.
  - ✓ The things in his head hadn't impacted his heart. His knowledge didn't translate into wisdom.
- Because Jonah understood the Scriptures well, he knew God was everywhere. He knew God is NOT present in some places while He's absent in others.
  - ✓ Yet Jonah tried to run to the farthest ends of the known civilized world to get away from God.
  - ✓ Jonah placed his own authority over God's authority – and by so doing, he deluded himself, and he became irrational.
- We've seen that Jonah received a direct command from God to do something and to go somewhere.
  - ✓ God had opened a door - but Jonah slammed it shut. He didn't want THAT door. He wanted a different door.
  - ✓ He ignored God, and he chose the opposite path instead.
  - ✓ Rather than contemplate a great work that God was about to do, Jonah cared more about himself and the things HE wanted to do.
  - ✓ Specifically (and we can see this from the larger context about him) Jonah had his OWN ideas of ministry. Who was God – or anyone else for that matter – to challenge that(?)
  - ✓ Jonah became a victim of his attitudes and ideas that he had nurtured about others.
  - ✓ God – as we will learn – was about to do something surprising and wonderful, but Jonah was not jazzed about any of that.
  - ✓ The bias he nurtured against others prevented him from a great ministry opportunity.
  - ✓ These bad attitudes in Jonah were counterproductive. They overruled a more humble and patient perspective that Jonah should have exercised.

- We learned that Jonah was called “*God’s servant*” in **2 Kings 14:25**. The Bible shows he had faithfully served God for a long time.
  - ✓ But we’ve also seen that this story of Jonah shows him as a rebellious, grumpy, prejudiced, and disobedient person.
  - ✓ He had a pretty bad ‘down moment’ – and nothing good came from it.
- We’ve noted how Jonah’s stubborn and self-centered choices inconvenienced others around him and placed them at personal risk.
  - ✓ Because Jonah’s conscience had become seared by his refusal to yield to God’s control, Jonah’s life had descended into a conundrum of senselessness and chaos.
  - ✓ There were warning signs along the way, but Jonah didn’t heed them.
  - ✓ Even the sailors grasped the gravity of Jonah’s selfish and senseless choices more than Jonah did.
  - ✓ And so, others around him suffered because Jonah refused to do the right thing.
  - ✓ His own bad choices became other people’s problems.
- We’ve also seen that Jonah would rather die than repent and do what God had instructed him to do.
  - ✓ He had reached a point where he just didn’t care anymore. Life wasn’t worth living.
  - ✓ If he couldn’t have things his way, then he wanted no other way. That’s how he saw it, and we’re going to see in lessons ahead that this posture continued.
  - ✓ He only cared about himself. He justified his own bad attitudes and his own personal pity party.

**NOTE:** So, all said, the backdrop of Jonah’s story ***up to this point*** is quite compelling. It’s a character study in faith that has been compromised – a faith that is not showing up.

- It shows Jonah floundering because of his poor choices, his personal rebellion, and his persistent disobedience. (And dare I say it again?): Jonah is a lot like us.
- As we’ve begun to realize, the more we study Jonah, the more he is a mirror in which we see our own bad attitudes and selfish ways that many of us show more than we’d like to admit.
- And as we will see – this prayer of Jonah in **Ch. 2** marks a turning point for him. He comes to his senses.

**2. Another high-altitude observation here is: this prayer makes the case that Jonah was alive in ‘the great fish.’ It shows he was rational.**

**NOTE:** I want to segue into this by taking a short rabbit-trail concerning two themes that somewhat merge here: (1.) ‘prayer’ and (2.) ‘death.’

**NOTE:** This is a matter where some folks lose their footing. So, let’s glance at these things for a few minutes.

- **First**, there is no place in the Bible where it is stated that any ***created being*** in heaven can pray or intercede for anyone on earth.
  - ✓ This includes Mary (Jesus' mother), church fathers, apostles, saints, family members, and angels.
  - ✓ Despite the traditions and the beliefs of Catholics and various other liturgical denominations, there is no Scriptural evidence that people in heaven can pray for people on earth.
  - ✓ In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in **Luke 16:27-28**, evidence is given that those who have died – including the unsaved – are keenly aware of the spiritual condition of those on earth.
  - ✓ And from **Rev. 6:10**, we know that those who have died and are in heaven are aware of events on earth and are concerned about justice.
  - ✓ But let me be clear: there is no Biblical basis to suggest that anyone who is now dead prays for anyone who is now alive.
  - ✓ What the Bible DOES teach is Jesus Christ intercedes for us in heaven.
    - **(Cf. Rom. 8:34)** *“(Jesus)....is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”*
    - **1 Tim. 2:5** says we have *“one mediator . . . , the man Christ Jesus”*
    - We're also told in **Rom. 8:26** that *“the Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*
    - *The bottom line is it's foolish fantasy at best, and horrible heresy at worst, to believe any human in heaven prays for any human on earth.*
    - *This suggestion is nothing less than a detraction from the person and work of Jesus Christ.*
  
- **Second**, there is no support in God's Word for praying for the dead.
  - ✓ Our prayers – no matter how sincere - have no bearing on anyone that has already passed away.
  - ✓ The simple reality is, upon death, one's eternal destiny is confirmed and unchangeable.
  - ✓ Either one is saved through faith in Jesus Christ while on earth, or one is condemned by their lack of faith in Jesus Christ while on earth.
  - ✓ There's no in-between, no gray, no purgatory, no second chances, and so on. It's black and white.
  - ✓ After death, everyone receives the outcome of their choice while they were alive.
  - ✓ There is absolutely no Biblical support for any notion that we can effect some sort of favorable outcome for anyone after they have died.
  - ✓ **Hebrews 9:27** tells us, *“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”* There is a 'before' and there is an 'after.'
  - ✓ The reality is that each of us has ONE life on earth, and we are responsible for how we live that life, and for what choices we make.

- ✓ No prayers by *anyone* can modify or effect any change in our eternal destiny once we die.
- **Third**, there is no evidence within the Bible that we can pray ONCE we're dead.
  - ✓ I bring this matter up because some people feel that Jonah died in the 'great fish' and that he therefore 'prayed in the spirit.'
  - ✓ I've looked diligently. I find no Biblical proof to support this position. I am aware that several of you wonder if this was the case with Jonah, but I personally think that's a stretch.
  - ✓ Furthermore, Jonah was God's servant as we learned. If he died, his soul would be in a blessed place. Why would he pray about being in distress and needing a second chance?
  - ✓ We'll talk a bit more about some of these issues shortly, and I think it'll be clear that Jonah was alive and coherent when he prayed.
- **Then lastly**, while we're on these issues of prayer and death, the Bible strictly forbids praying TO the dead.
  - ✓ **Deut. 18:11** tells us that anyone who "consults with the dead – *"who inquires of a charmer, a medium, or a necromancer"* is *"detestable to the Lord."*
  - ✓ The story of King Saul consulting a medium to bring up the spirit of the dead prophet, Samuel, contributed to his death *"because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance"* (**Cf. 1 Samuel 28:1-25; 1 Chron. 10:13-14**).
  - ✓ So, when all is said here...
    - We are not to expect prayers FROM the dead,
    - There is no Scriptural support to the notion that we can pray WHEN we're dead,
    - It is fruitless and ineffective to pray FOR the dead,
    - And we're definitely not supposed to pray TO the dead.

**NOTE:** I think that concludes our little rabbit-trail. Now let's return to some of the issues of Jonah's rational state while he was IN the 'great fish.'

**NOTE:** There are several things I want to point out about Jonah's prayer, and they all begin with two important words: "Jonah knows."

- When we 'know' something, it is our rational sense that shows up. It is our exercise of will that is on display.
- By using these words, 'Jonah knows,' I mean to say he has certainty, conviction, and comprehension.
- Here is a list of things that 'Jonah knows' – and we can see these things in his prayer:

1. Jonah knows God is near.
2. Jonah knows God is sovereign.
3. Jonah knows God will restore him.
4. Jonah knows God is a God of grace.

## B. JONAH KNOWS GOD IS NEAR

- In **vs. 2**, Jonah says, *“In my distress, I called out to the Lord, and He answered me. From the depths of the grave, I called for help, and you listened to my cry.”*
- Similar thoughts are reinforced throughout this prayer, but the point is clearly made that Jonah knows God is near.
- This is a sobering and significant development to consider because up to now, Jonah has been trying to get away from God.
  - ✓ In **Ch. 1:3**, we saw that Jonah *‘ran away from the Lord.’*
  - ✓ In **Ch. 1:10**, Jonah even confessed to the sailors that he was running away from the Lord.
  - ✓ In his foolish and clouded ‘human nature,’ he tried to flee to Tarshish, the farthest known geographical point, to avoid responding to God.
  - ✓ We’ve seen in all of Jonah’s thoughts and actions up to this point that Jonah was trying to escape God and shut Him out.
  - ✓ And now, with his habits of disobedience still fresh, Jonah confesses the words of his desperate situation.
  - ✓ His mind became rational once more. Jonah stopped doing what he had been doing. He stopped fighting the truth. He stopped his pathetic little game.
  - ✓ Jonah could have stubbornly and selfishly turned inward. He could have continued in his defiance. He could have kept up his act.
  - ✓ He could have determined he’d rather die than obey God (I still think he felt that way up on the ship), and he could have obstinately furthered his efforts to separate himself from God.
  - ✓ But I think the utter hopelessness and ridiculousness of his situation suddenly overwhelmed him when he hit the water and sank down.
  - ✓ His rational mind took over once more, and he realized that even despite his sins and his foolishness, God was still close by.
  - ✓ And so, Jonah, in his distress, called out to the Lord. He **knew** God was near.
- In working on this point of Jonah’s prayer, I think Jonah’s words reveal a sequence of what happened when he hit the water.
  - ✓ I don’t think the ‘great fish’ showed up right away.
  - ✓ I think Jonah sank a long ways down first: *‘to the depths of the grave’ (vs. 2), ‘into the deep and the very heart of the seas’ (vs. 3), ‘the deep surrounded him and seaweed was wrapped around his head’ (vs. 5), ‘he sank down to the roots of the mountains’ (vs. 6), and ‘his life was ebbing away’ (vs. 7).*

- ✓ In short - he was drowning. His options had run out. And in his final moments of life, his mind stopped being foolish, and his choices changed.
- ✓ Jonah regretted who he'd been and what he'd done, and he threw up a desperate prayer based on a fundamental truth: God was still near.
- ✓ In that hopeless situation, Jonah says in **vs. 7**, *'I remembered you, Lord,'* and he further adds, that his prayer rose *'to your holy temple.'*
- ✓ (Sidenote): this is the era of the First Temple. The temple that Solomon built was still standing and being used. The Ark of the Covenant was there, the place where the presence of God met with His people.
- ✓ Jonah was rational, and he prayed his desperate prayers not only to the Lord, but to the specific place of His worship.
- ✓ It's *after* Jonah narrates out the details of his sinking and drowning that he says in the second part of **vs. 6**, *"But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God."*
- ✓ I think Jonah hit the water, sank far, and was drowning. Jonah knew that, and in those last elements of his desperate situation, he stopped fighting God and running from Him.
- ✓ In a turnabout, he became rational with the truth once more. He prayed to God because He knew God was near. It was Jonah's return to faith.
- ✓ And that's when the 'great fish' showed up, and Jonah says he was brought back *'from the pit.'*

### C. JONAH KNOWS GOD IS SOVEREIGN

- In **vs. 3**, Jonah says, *"YOU hurled me into the deep,"* and at the end of that same verse he says, *"all YOUR waves and breakers swept over me."*
- In **vs. 6**, he says, *"YOU brought my life up from the pit."*
- Jonah had been in the business of running from God, of ignoring the truth about God, of disobeying God, and of searing his own conscience against the will of God.
- But none of his choices and actions took away from the fact that Jonah knew God is sovereign.
  - ✓ Jonah knew that on the boat when he told the sailors God had sent the supernatural storm.
  - ✓ He knew God was ultimately the one who *'hurled him into the deep,'* and he knew God controlled the seas.
  - ✓ And he knew God sovereignly gave him another chance and *'brought his life up from the pit.'*
- One of the most significant pieces of evidence that Jonah was rational and in his right mind is the simple truth that he knew God was sovereign.
  - ✓ Think about it. It's when we think WE'RE in control that we start to worry.

- ✓ It's when we delude ourselves and we think WE must take charge - and WE need to control the outcomes that we act our most foolish.
- ✓ And peace. It's when we are 100% convinced that a gracious and loving God is completely sovereign that we are most rational, most faithful, and most at peace.

#### **D. JONAH KNOWS GOD WILL RESTORE HIM**

- I think the text suggests that it was after the 'great fish' swallowed Jonah, and he remained alive – that Jonah made his vows in **vs. 9** and pledged to '*make good*' on them.
- It was at this point that Jonah expressed thanksgiving, that he anticipated being able to offer sacrifices to the Lord again.
- Jonah, while being preserved alive in the 'great fish' didn't know HOW next steps would unfold, but I think he knew God still had a plan for him.
- And so, while he found himself in very strange circumstances, Jonah exercised very great faith. He knew God would restore him, and he confessed these details.
- (Moment of reflection): Sometimes when we are in a place like Jonah was, we feel very unworthy.
- It's easy to feel guilty and undeserving – especially when we've been in a pattern of sin and making lousy decisions.
- Honestly, these are natural responses. There should be some level of acknowledgement on our part of our unworthiness.
- We are not worthy of God's abundant grace in our lives. We have nothing to give to Him, nor could we ever repay Him.
- That gets back to the definition of grace as 'getting what we do not deserve.' It's unmerited favor.
- But what I'm driving at is there is also a point where guilt needlessly hangs on.
- Satan uses our unworthiness to say to us, "See, you are too far gone. You made an absolute mess of things and God can never use you now."
- Jonah's example shows us that we can give God our worst, but God will still restore us.

#### **E. THEN LASTLY, JONAH KNOWS GOD IS A GOD OF GRACE**

- God knows that we cannot survive very long in this life without His grace.
- And Jonah – as he now returns to a rational faith and perspective – knows the same thing. He knows he would not have survived without God's grace.
- And Jonah reflects on God's grace by calling out those who '*cling to worthless idols*' in **vs. 8**.
- By Jonah acknowledging that God is a God of grace - - he considers an infinite contrast to illustrate this truth. He considers those who worship idols instead.



- He's had this crowd very much in mind as he's contemplated the population of Ninevah, and as he recalls the sailors who prayed fruitlessly to their false 'gods' during the storm.
- But I also think Jonah sees a bit of himself in this '*idol*' assessment. The text does not state that, but it is implied.
- I think Jonah realizes he placed his own ambitions above God's. I think Jonah knew he pushed God down while lifting himself up.
- Jonah knows his own idolatrous attitudes risked him not experiencing God's grace as he did.
- It was not until Jonah repented – until he humbled himself, and returned to his senses, that he fully comprehended God's grace.
- He knew he had made choices that almost '*forfeited the grace he received,*' and so in his gratitude, Jonah calls out those who miss God's grace by their own choices.

I'M GOING TO WIND DOWN HERE BY GIVING A FEW APPLICATIONS FOR YOU AND ME:

**1. First, we all need a 'great fish' experience now and then to force us to rely on the character and grace of God.**

- We all know our sinfulness. And – like Jonah – we've all run from God.
- Like Ashley said in her excellent article in this week's email, your "Nineveh" may not be a physical place, but areas in your life that you avoid facing—old wounds you keep buried, truths you don't want to confront, and forgiveness you don't want to extend.
- And like Jonah, we have our reasons, our defenses. We come up with every excuse to avoid God and outrun the assignments God places before us.
- And just like Jonah, we can get ourselves in a tough spot when we do this. We force ourselves into a dead end – we come into our own 'great fish' experience where we feel trapped and without hope.
- It's those situations that force us to rely on the character of God. They are our wake-up call. They are our 'come to Jesus' moments.
- And thankfully, God is a God of grace. We can rely on his character.
- When we put down our idols and our own ideals, that's when God can start the restorative process in our lives.

**2. Second, Jonah's pattern is just like ours. and because of that, we are wisest to see the road signs before things get treacherous and desperate for us.**

- Don't fool yourself. You've seen a similar set of circumstances played out in your own life. Here's how the sequence of steps usually goes:
  - God gives you a command to do something – you know He's placed a direction or decision in your life that you need to go into.
  - But you do not want to follow that command – THAT direction or THAT decision is not to your liking.

- So you decide that you are not going to listen to God – you find some excuse or reason to ignore God and do your own thing instead.
- That's when God allows a crisis moment in your life – it becomes unbearable and painful, and so you cry out to Him in total desperation.
- You ask for God's forgiveness and the opportunity to get back on track – you want to be restored out of the mess you've made. You make vows to do the right thing.
- That's when God restores you and sets you on a right path once again – you understand what you're to do and you follow through in obedience.
- I used the word 'you' there a lot, but this is really about all of us. And if you're like me, you've gone through all those steps a time or two (or 30 or 40 times) in your life.
- This is the sinful human condition we are all born into. This is our hopeless situation without Jesus Christ. The fact is *we choose sin over our Savior. We choose selfishness over surrender.* That's our natural inclination.
- That can lead to some awful situations. We may not end up where Jonah was at: confined in the belly of a whale, seaweed wrapped around our necks, smelling of two-month-old sushi - - but we will be in our own extreme pain and despair...all because we chose to say no to God.

**NEXT TIME:** "On the Road Again" (Jonah makes a vow and carries it through)

---



**SOLID  
BREAD**

Solid Bread Community was started with a passion to teach the truth of God's Word – every part of it, as it was divinely inspired to be understood.

The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don't pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

**Contact Solid Bread Community at:**

**PO Box 431**

**Windsor, CO 80550**

[www.solidbreadcommunity.com](http://www.solidbreadcommunity.com)

Email: [connect@solidbreadcommunity.com](mailto:connect@solidbreadcommunity.com)

Please follow us on our You Tube channel at [www.youtube.com/@SolidBreadCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/@SolidBreadCommunity)