



... when you need a break from the daily grind



JONAH FOR GROWN-UPS: A PICTURE OF GOD'S OUTRAGEOUS GRACE

#3 of 6: *God's way out*

➤ READY TO GO

God is a God of the unexpected. After all who would think that God's provision for Jonah would be a great fish? Yuk! The smell and the darkness and the claustrophobia. Not pleasant, but at least it was better than drowning. It also gave Jonah an opportunity to reflect on his life up to that point, how he had got into this mess – literally – and call out to God in this darkest of situations. The amazing thing is that God heard this prayer from the weirdest of places and the fish showed up Jonah when it immediately spat him out at God's command. The fish obeyed when the prophet hadn't! Let's reflect on the story in more detail.

➤ READ

- **Read Jonah 1:17 -2:10.** What encouragement do you take from the words "But the Lord..."? (v17)
- What do you learn from Jonah's actions about when to pray? (2v1)
- What aspects of Jonah's prayer are positive? Which are negative? (vv2-6) What practical lesson do you learn from this?
- What encouragement do you take from the statement Jonah made in v7?
- How do you respond to the statement with which Jonah concluded his prayer (v 8-9)?
- Select some elements of Jonah's prayer which challenged or encouraged you and use them in your prayers this week.

➤ REFLECT

When he wakes up in God's waiting room of the fish's stomach, Jonah certainly isn't as silent as he was during the storm when all the sailors were crying to their gods. Now he calls to God – and God answered him! What might not be immediately obvious is that Jonah's prayer is full of quotations from the Psalms – verse 2 from Psalm 18:6; verse 3 from Psalm 42:7 and verse 6 from Psalm 30:3. How important it is to have God's word stored in our minds so that we can pray it back to God in dark situations. Interestingly, Jonah omits to quote from Psalms like 40:8 and 143:10 which speak of surrender to God's will. He wasn't yet at the point of unconditional surrender, but at least he could end his prayer with unconditional thanksgiving. Why? Because whatever we're facing "Salvation comes from the Lord."

Calling out to God in the darkest of situations brings results. But perhaps we could avoid some dark places if we weren't so disobedient. If a fish can obey God's commands, why don't we?