

# Jonah

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[ 0 : 0 0 ] If the Lord should be pleased to help me I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Jonah chapter 2 and the 7th verse When my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee into thine holy temple chapter 2 the book of Jonah and the 7th verse This word which welled up in Jonah's breath long ago and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth was speaking is one of the most wonderful words to encourage poor sinners to hope in God sinners born again who feel that their cases are unusual and out of the way who feel their cases are indescribable in words and they can hardly tell what they are or where they are in things divine and yet there is help in God the book of Jonah is often the butt of godless critics but to people who have the mercy to be taught of God as they journey on through life they will thankfully acknowledge that it is in the category of what the word of God declares all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable because dear friends if you and I are taught of God we shall feel that we have no stones to fling at Jonah as we journey on through life as we read what his behavior was before God with whom he had to do you and I will have to turn our eyes within and realize that our hearts are Jonah night deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and that what other people taught of God have been left to do as recorded in the word of God you and I might be left to do likewise but for the keeping power of God with caution we should tread for as we sow we reap and offering mischief on our heads by some unwary step

I thought sometimes and I still think that scripture in the epistle of Peter is a great word to ponder in our hearts and seek a living interest therein who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time and you and I if we are taught of God will know of a truth myself I cannot save myself I cannot keep but strength in thee I fain would have whose eyelids never sleep and now I want as the Lord to help me to look at this subject from three viewpoints of it and look a little at the setting of it for that is very striking and if viewed aright it is very instructive the word of the Lord came to

Jonah and he was a man taught of God and ordained to be a prophet but the word of the Lord came to Jonah saying arise go to Nineveh that great city and cry against it for their wickedness is come up before thee and very solemn is the continuation as you are aware but Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord and went down to Joppa what was behind Jonah's behavior as the word of the Lord came to him arise go to Nineveh Jonah being an Israelite indeed reacted to it and he said deep down in his heart I will go anywhere to preach to Israelites if God should send me but as for preaching to Nineveh no no

I do not want to go to preach to Nineveh in other words the Nineveh were Gentiles and they were Israel's inveterate foes and here Jonah failed very very much to realize what is the essence of the gospel of the grace of God Jesus Christ when he died on Calvary's cross ere he died proclaimed concerning those who were his enemies father forgive them for they know not what they do but Jonah had not drunk into the spirit of Christ like that and he thought his own thoughts and reacted to the word of the Lord arise go to Nineveh and Jonah says no no he did not want the Ninevites to obtain any mercy and now

I need take up no time in trying to show you that such a spirit is altogether foreign to the gospel of Christ and now when the Lord gives a word to anyone who is taught of God whatever that word is it should be remembered what Jesus Christ said to his disciples follow me and if the word seems to you one hard to be understood it is for you to be obedient to it as you read in the word of God as obedient children not to argue cavil or dictate what should be done or not be done but to do what is the word of the

[ 8 : 15 ] Lord for that and that alone will bring glory to the Lord in his dealings with poor sinners down through the ages and the Lord dealt with Jonah oh the word of God is very solemn thou God seest me and although Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord and was a disobedient prophet the eye of the Lord was upon him and he dealt with him and oh how solemn were the dealings of God with Jonah and yet when at length he is cast into the sea and as the word of God tells us now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah and

Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights and now I judge this to be one of the most striking instances the word of God contains and what you dear young people will be able to recognize when I tell you that this is a real evidence that the religion that is of God is altogether supernatural and now Jonah prayed unto the

I have sometimes been very impressed in listening to some of our people when they have come before the church to give a detail of the dealings of God with their souls and again and again and yet again they have used this expression relating some special trouble which came upon them as they journeyed on through life when they got good for their souls and they have said oh if ever I prayed it was then and if you like to go through the word of God and search out the then you will find quite a few then where people taught of God prayed and they prayed in their prayer as you read margin reading and

Elijah prayed in his prayer and so it was with Jonah but was he in the fish's belly only no all around him there was terror what the outcome might be Jonah could not tell but he was alive but in his soul feelings he was in the belly of hell oh Jonah had got a companion with him where he was in the fish's belly and in the belly of hell and that was a guilty conscience and there he was even then in such circumstances arraigned before God with who he had to do and he humbles himself I cried by reason of mine affliction margin out of mine affliction unto the

Lord and he heard me oh but what must Jonah's feelings have been how difficult to describe out of the belly of hell cried I and thou heard this my voice does it not remind you of godly David when he said the pains of hell got hold upon me I found trouble and sorrow then cried I unto the Lord and he heard my voice yes then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses you go back over your life you can do it quite a few of you the grey heads especially and some of you whose heads are not yet grey go back over your life as you have lived it and ponder in your hearts the times when it could have been said by you then then

[ 13 : 41 ] I pray and you got help to do it and you got help from God yes and Jonah says this I am cast out of thy sight and that was how we felt it was not the truth of the matter because the eye of the Lord was upon him where he was in the belly of hell as he felt and in the whale's belly as he really was the eye of the Lord was upon him there but according to his own feelings Jonah was on the borderland of despair I I I I I will look again toward thy holy temple and now here you see faith in wonderful exercise in the most unusual circumstances and it was so with godly job long before when his circumstances were so complicated and what did he say though he slay me yet

I will trust in him and Jonah did not know our matters were going to fall out but he did what God enabled him to do I will look again toward thy holy temple and the hymn writer says you might have been glad of it see a poor sinner dearest Lord whose soul encouraged by thy word at mercy's foot to a wood remain and there would look and look again and how wonderful is the sight that is given to living pain I will look again toward thy holy temple and you must not think that Jonah had in his mind Solomon's temple or the temple that was built after Solomon's temple was destroyed no no thy holy temple he was thinking of

Jesus Christ where the God shines gracious through the man remember that thou that dwellest between the cherubims shine forth oh it was to the sinner's friend that Jonah was enabled by living faith to look and look again I will look again toward thy holy temple and that brings us down to our subject when my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord and now what a wonderful comment this is on that word of the saviour men are always to pray and not to faint and how it shows to us what that word means wherefore he is able to say unto the uttermost them that come unto

God by him for he ever liveth to make intercession for them but ere Jonah got a deliverance and the Lord appeared on his behalf and brought him forth and sent him again to do the work he was at first sent out to do Jonah had to make a confession and he says they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy and now it was a lie in vanity for Jonah to be more concerned about his own reputation as a prophet if he did go to Nineveh and preach Jonah had a thought in his breast that the Lord would be as he often is in his dealing with poor sinners he would grant the

Ninevites mercy and then it would look as though Jonah was not a prophet with a good reputation because his prophecy had not been fulfilled and now that is termed a lying vanity Jonah was more concerned about his own reputation as a prophet than to go and preach the gospel to the Ninevites and sometimes men sent of God to preach nowadays are perhaps more concerned with their reputation as being the men that they are known to be to sometimes do what the word of the Lord is when it should come arise go to Nineveh and preach and then for them to go it is well to remember that

[ 19 : 37 ] Jesus Christ made himself of no reputation what the word of the Lord is that you and I must seek divine aid to obey it whatever our thoughts about it may be in the doing of it leave the issue with God and so the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time saying arise go to Nineveh that great city and preach unto it the preaching that I be in so Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord and there is just one other comment I will make here then

I will open up the subject as grace is given and Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey and he cried and said yet forty days and Nineveh should be overthrown and now listen so the people of Nineveh believed God you might have thought it would read so the people of Nineveh believed Jonah no believed God because it was the word of the Lord proclaimed by Jonah and they believed God was indeed the author of it and they repented and God acknowledged it for what it was worth I say that with great reverence for it was just a national repentance and the Lord accepted it and he would accept that from England as a nation if it could be produced or that it might be the judgment of

God came upon Nineveh 150 years afterwards when the word of Jonah as he proclaimed it was fulfilled to the uttermost and it is said in the little book of Nahum concerning Nineveh God is the speaker I will dig thy grave and you can only find a mound or two nowadays if the archaeologists have searched amidst the so-called ruins and that is all that is left of Nineveh one of the greatest cities the world has ever seen yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown the word of the Lord was ultimately fulfilled but as the people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them even to the least of them the Lord accepted it and

God saw their work that they turned from their evil way and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them and he did it not and that means he did it not at that time as it were speaking with great reverence he suspended his judgment but it came down in an awful fullness 150 years afterwards when my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee into thine holy temple and now in this subject there is much as grace is given to unfold it to encourage poor sinners born again to hope in God and many of us even those who have had our names on the church roll so long that we have grown grey headed while they have been recorded there do know what it is to have faint in souls when my soul fainted within me and now what is it that causes people to faint it is a lack of oxygen in the air where they are and they go down under it and they faint for the want of that which keeps us alive and lively to do our duties and face our difficulties and what is it that brings about a fainting soul in people who were taught of

God it is still a want of oxygen but it is if I may use the word spiritual oxygen what does the hymn writer say now from the throng withdrawn away they seem to breathe a different air composed and softened by the day all things and other aspects were it is one of being enabled to breathe the atmosphere of heaven which alone can keep our souls alive and lively in things divine and I'm very much afraid that most folks who are taught of God as you and I know of them in our own denominational life often have fainted souls for the want of that which is the power of

[ 25 : 39 ] God unto salvation to everyone which believe it I will look at some of these things which bring about a fainting soul where the sinner is indeed born again if the sinner was not born again he would not react to the things within and without that brings about a fainting soul when my soul fainting within me I remembered the Lord God and now have you noticed I have no doubt you have but have you pondered in your heart prayerfully and sought to reduce it to practice have you noticed the word diligence in the sacred pages in your readings the soul of the diligent should be made fact and now if it should be otherwise with you and you are not diligent if your hands are slack in the things of

God and if you are called and lethargic in your worship of God in public and private life two you will have a faint of soul as the outcome of it it is not written without deep meaning wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and your election sure you must not balk at that word diligence because I thought many times if even people taught of God were only half as diligent in things divine if they are to get on in the things of everyday life and line their nest well and gather all the comfort together they can under their home's roof they would look a lot better in living the life of the righteous than they often do I'm not sitting any caps on I'm just telling you the truth preacher and people alike must all plead guilty here when prayer is a burden and task no wonder

I little receive oh lord make me willing to ask since thou are so ready to give it when my soul painted within you you will faint sometimes when you turn your eyes within and you get a God given sight of how sad our state by nature is it is very solemn and very painful to contemplate and Isaiah describes it from the soul of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it wounds and bruises putrefying source and you know this is plentifully described in our hymn book and you find many of the hymn writers define it one you will remember if

I turn my eyes within all is dark and vain and wild full of unbelief and sin can I deem myself a child and you faint at the sight of what you are by nature and your guiltiness before God your undone state in the Adam fall because you were made aware in the midst of it all of your utter helplessness in things divine and how impossible it is for you to better your state in your soul although you feel as you do oh you want that which a man cannot receive except it be given him from heaven when my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord how wonderful a comment this word of

Jonas is on that word the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him and that means every poor sinner born again whose heart is sincere who is honest hearted before God as he approaches the majesty of heaven and so it was with Jonah oh poor Jonah had to be like the woman in the gospel falling down at Jesus' feet she told him all the truth and that is what you will have to do to get relief for your fainting soul you will be made aware of some things you have been guilty in whereby you have got a fainting soul come upon you your sins your iniquities have separated between you and your

[ 31 : 15 ] God I like what is recorded in the book of Job if any man say I have sinned I have done that which is not right and it profiteth me not then he is gracious unto him and says deliver him from going down into the pit for I have found a ransom oh it is good news from heaven dear friends if we confess our sins even though you are like poor Jonah in the belly of hell in your soul's feelings and reduce the self despair and wondering if there can be hope for such and one as you feel to be if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness here is the remedy when my soul painted within me

I remembered the Lord as though Jonah said I remembered that he is the sinner's friend I remember it is recorded by the Salmist he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer I remembered the Lord I remembered who he is verily God verily man I remembered behold God is almighty and he despises not any or to the gracious king approach who set apart and gives perhaps he will command my touch and then the suppliant lives when my soul painted within me sometimes you will have a fainting soul because of your everyday life with the stress and strain of it duties to do difficulties to face and you find every day new straits attend and life seems to become to you more and more complicated and your soul paints in the midst of it and you need divine aid to continue and that divine aid is attainable they that wait upon the

Lord shall renew their strength this is the way dear friends when my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord you and I have got to learn even deeper down yet none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good then are they brought to their witch's end margin reading all their wisdom is swallowed up then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses all thou that hearest prayer is one of the dearest titles given to God with whom you and I have to do and good it is that some of us can declare that

Christ is God I can avouch and for his people care since I have prayed to him as such and he has heard my prayer when my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord you will have a fainting soul sometimes because you have quite a deal to do with the world in your everyday life it may be to earn the bread which perish it and the spirit of the world reacts upon you and your soul is deadened thereby and more like a wilderness often than what it could be as a watered garden oh it does need much grace to be separated from the world the spirit of it creeps in comes in through eye gate comes in through ear gate yes and you were brought to the ends of the earth and you awake to a solemn consciousness that your soul is painting for the want of something from heaven to make it to be more lively in things divine and keep you more separated from the world in which you live and move when my soul painted within me you may have a fainting soul because in everyday life if you should go without food you will become faint for the want of nourishment and now it might be that you come into an experience in the dealings of

God with you that even under the gospel and gathering around where the gospel table is spread it may be to you that there seems nothing to solace your soul no spiritual food can you seem to obtain hardly a crumb of mercy to keep you hoping against hope and you find such cases are recorded in the word of God here is one when the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue palest for thirst either Lord will hear them either God of Israel will not forsake them to go without food and more still to go without water to drink will bring about a fainting state in our souls experience hunger and thirst your thirst what are you to do what can you do what can you do but seek divine aid to do this when my soul fainted within me

[ 39 : 11 ] I remembered the Lord in such a case is yours makes you think of what Moses the man of God said to Israel of old the case that is too hard for thee bring it unto me and I will hear it and you poor sinner you must carry your case to the Lord and tell him all the truth as to what you are what you desire to be and you will find this is a great truth I remember the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee into thine holy temple you find some pattern prayer shall I say in the word of God when you were in such a case with your soul hungry and thirsty and fainted oh

Lord I am oppressed undertake for me and here is the one that will suit you best of all Lord save or I perish and you find then the arm of the Lord is put forth and you know that the arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save neither is its ear heavy that it cannot hear when my soul fainted within me I remember the Lord sometimes you may have a fainting soul because you can remember when your soul was lively in things divine when you could dwell upon the things of God with sweet pleasure and realize man does not live by bread alone but by every word out of the mouth of

God does man live when you could rejoice in hope of life eternal and now if you contemplate your fainting soul you have to stay with the church we cannot see our signs you try to remember the way God has led you along but all seems to be in obscurity and darkness zeal extinguished to a spark life is very low all my evidence is dark and good works I have none to show and your soul does indeed paint as you wonder what has happened to all your past experience what has become of your religion that once helped you to live near to God and the things of

God were then the element in which you lived and moved oh but there is a word recorded in the book of Joel I will restore to you the years which the locust and the canker and the caterpillar and the palm worm hath eaten when my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord oh he can restore life to what seemed dead before as you remember the Lord do remember what he declares I am the resurrection and the life whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die no no what you want poor sinner in your pain in state is to realize the power of his resurrection and that will revive in your soul all that he has done for your soul and help you to feel as you want to feel that he which has begun the good work in you will perform it until the day of

Jesus Christ when my soul fainted within me you may be saying why art thou cast down oh my soul why art thou disquieted within me hope thou in God you are cast down in your soul but what did David say also in that beautiful psalm of his the cast down soul psalm as it is termed oh my God my soul is cast down within me but I will remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites and from the hill Mysar there were some places in David's earlier life where the hand of God had been upon him for good in some way outstanding and he called those things to mind and he could argue if the Lord were pleased to kill us would he have shown us all these things and it helped him to hope even against hope so you you you will find it to be who against hope believed in hope when my soul painted within me

[ 44 : 54 ] I remembered the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee into thine holy temple Jonah when he was in the whale's belly and in the belly of hell as he tells us in this beautiful little book of his and remember Jonah is the author of it inspired by God and do remember dear friends it needs a great deal of grace for a man to write his own autobiography and put down in black and white for every eye to read what his thoughts really were sometimes autobiographies are rather overlooked to correct them and they put the best face upon a man whose life is set forth therein but it is not like that in the word of

God no makes me think of Cromwell when he lived and there was some great concern that he should have his portrait painted and he did not wish it and at last he consented but only on one condition that they should paint him as he was with a wart on his face and that is just what the word of God does in setting forth people who were taught of God there is no touching up allowed in the word of God to make the photograph flatter the one whose photograph it is no it is stern stark truth and so it must be with you as you appear before God he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God and with your fainting soul as you remember the

Lord and you venture to his footstool you will have to say to thee I come a sinner great and well thou knowest all my state yet full forgiveness is with thee oh God be merciful to me and this word for which I have said just a little in this morning sermon will help you to realize Jesus blood through earth and skies mercy eternal mercy cries when my soul painted within me I remembered the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee into thine holy temple and who can tell but what God will be gracious to you amen