

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Jonah: Arise & Go

PART

2

TITLE

Into The Storm

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:7-17



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Brian Frost: I want to ask you to turn with me to the first chapter of Jonah, if you brought a bible. If you did not there should be one in the seats near you and if you don't have one at home please take that home with you as a guest. We love the bible here. If you're new to Providence, we love Christ, we love the gospel and what the gospel says, it's the message of the bible and it helps us to understand that it's really not about what you do. It's about what Christ did.

We're a people who are not trying to scale a mountain in order to impress God. We're a people who believe that Jesus Christ, God's son, came down from that mountain and satisfied God and his wrath that was aimed at us by dying on a cross for our sin, by being buried in a grave and then rising from the dead. We love Jesus here at Providence. True?

Audience: Yes.

Brian Frost: Is that true? Yes, we do. The last time that I actually preached in this room, I just thought about this last hour, I had brown hair. We used to do the single's gathering here at the DOC and I was so young back then, but it is great to see you and certainly this day, it's different and it's also very exciting. Sort of like when you drive someone else's car. You sort of get in and you think, "Okay, I think I can get to where I need to get to, but where are the lights in this thing?" That's sort of how we feel this morning. There's a lot of moving pieces. If you did not get word, in particular, if you're in this room with me is we had three of the five A/C units were vandalized. The first service we actually had to put it down to 65 degrees and so if you're cold it was a little cooler then and it's going to warm up through the morning and so we had to start low.

In the next eight to 10 months, at least that's what we sort of think, as we adjust to this pattern and as we endure what probably at some point of time will not be so comfortable, I just want to encourage us in two areas. Number one is let's be a thankful people. I mean, think about what the Lord has provided us and that we have enough other rooms for us to be able to gather on a day like today and they're nice rooms. I mean, praise God of his generosity to us. The second thing is this, is that as we endure, as we adjust, I want to encourage us to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, the author of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross for us.

See, something is going to dominate our vision, our attention, our affection over the next eight to 10 months. When you come into this building and into these parking lots and you go back out something is going to be your due North when you leave. There's going to be something you want to talk about and it'll be possible for us if we wanted to to talk about the dust or the long walk from the parking lot all the way down to the DOC, or for those of you who are in rooms where the whole thing this morning was on a screen. That's different. I understand that it is different. Something is going to grab our attention, but let me tell you something, only Jesus is worthy of it. Only Jesus is worthy of it.

You know, there's been a lot of weddings that have happened in this room and it's interesting what happens at a wedding. Those doors open at that moment when the bride is about to come in and no one has to coax people to look or to care that it's now time for her to walk down. She naturally grabs the attention of everyone in the room and what I want you to know is this is that if we will just look Jesus has even more power to have that same effect in our life. In all the change and all the dust and all the distractions we still need to be a people who love Jesus and who fix our eyes on Jesus. Amen?

Audience: Amen.

Brian Frost: Let's pray together. Okay? Father in heaven we thank you for your word. Thank you for Jonah chapter one. Thank you that it shows us the lengths that you will go to in order to move and change and reach us. When we are in our sin, when we are in a storm, when we are discouraged, when we are depressed, Lord it is an amazing thing. It's possible for us, Lord, to think about everyone as we read this story except for you and yet the whole thing is about you. God, would you give us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to understand. God, would you give us the gift of belief as we read this and as we draw principles out of for how to live? Would you give us courage to put those into practice? God, I pray that you, as we read this, that you inside of our hearts, God, that you would make much of Jesus Christ. We love you and we are grateful and we pray this. In Jesus name, Amen.

Jonah, at the stage of where we're at right now at Providence, this is a very important book for us. You see, if we really hope to plant what we've done over the last several weeks. Not last week, but the ones before that, plant our life in the church and plant the gospel in our city and to plant churches in the world then each one of us needs to understand that we have our individual part to play in engaging in that mission of God. What Jonah says, the theme is to help us understand is that God wants to use you and that God can use you. No matter where you're at in life, no matter how far, even today, that you are from God is that he has the power to work in your life in such a way that it literally can change cities. That's how powerful he is. That's exactly what we need. There's a lot of people who actually don't believe that Jonah was an actual man, or if they do believe they think that parts of the story were made up as sort of like a myth or a metaphor, that points us to spiritual truths.

The fact is the story of Jonah does point us to spiritual truths, but it's not a myth. This is actually something that took place. If we're really honest, in particular those of us that know the bible and have read the bible, this is not the most challenging thing in the bible to believe. The whole bible begins with there is nothing and God says words and speaks everything into existence. You get to Luke chapter two and it says that that same God, that he came to this world in order to redeem us and how he came is he chose a virgin in order to give birth to him.

You see, the most challenging thing in Jonah to believe is that a man was swallowed by a fish and then survived within the belly of that fish for three days. Some people really struggle with that. I get that, but let me just say this; if the God that you intend to worship can't do miracles, he's not worthy of your worship.

You have to ask this question when you come to the bible, and it's this: is there a sovereign, all powerful, God that works in the world, or is there not? If there is he can pull off a fish thing, right? He can do this. What we find in God's word, Jesus believed and taught that he was a historical, real man in Matthew chapter 12. Jonah, we're told in Jonah chapter one verse one had a real dad. Then we also find in Second Kings chapter 14 verse 25 that Jonah was a real prophet in a real country called all of Israel. It's an amazing thing that this real man ... This real man, one day, we're told in verse one of the book, it says that the word of the lord came to Jonah. Now, this is not the first time that he had heard God's voice in this way. He was a prophet and what that means is that God would speak to him. He was familiar with his voice. He would then take the message that God gave him, he would go out to the people, he would share that message with the people and then all the sudden it would come to pass. That's how everyone knew he was a prophet and not just a charlatan.

He says this is going to happen next month and then it happens next month. It says, "The word of the Lord came." Now, this is really, really important, which is why I'm going to talk about it for two weeks. Everything that God does in this world does not begin with you or with me. It always begins with God. There wasn't this Godly widow in Nineveh praying, "Oh God, would you please save our city and send a prophet in order to preach to us."

Jonah wasn't filled with compassion and mercy towards this people saying, "God, wouldn't it be good for us to go and tell them the good news that you can forgive them?" Nobody is thinking about what God is thinking about. It all begins with God. This is true in your life. You may sit here and think, "I have a friend who needs the lord." What you need to know is this is that God was even thinking about that friend before he placed it upon your heart to think about that friend. He's the initiator of all things spiritual. He's God.

It says that he comes to Jonah and he says, "I want you to rise, I want you to go, and I want you tell the people of Nineveh that their sins have literally stacked up before me." That brings us to the central crisis of the book of Jonah, which is the central crisis in your life and my life as a believer. It's this: is that sometimes God asks us to do things and tells us to do things that we don't want to do. We have this great vision, right? We have a plan. Three year, we're going to do this. What if we don't want to do it? What if we don't want to pray, or give, or serve, or connect, or come to worship, or perhaps let's leave the vision. Let's just talk about other things that God has clearly commanded within his word. What if you don't want to be sober? What if you don't want to be pure, or faithful to your spouse? What if you don't want to be kind to your kids or what if you don't want to stop cussing? What if you don't want to do something and all of the sudden you see where the scripture goes, "This is what I want and this is what I want for you," and all the sudden there's this crisis, there's this tension point.

This is exactly what takes place in Jonah is Jonah hated these people. He was self righteous, they were of a different race, he was racist against them. He hated all of Syria and Nineveh was the capital of this great and powerful super power of the world at the time. He hated them. In fact, we're told in Jonah chapter four verse two after he fled it says that he tells God why. He says, "Look, this is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish for I knew that you're a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster."

Here's his crisis point. He's saying, "God, I hear what you're saying. You want me to go to this people. You want me to tell them things and I'm familiar with telling hard truths to people who don't like me, so that's not the fear. My fear is this, I hate them. I want you to destroy them. If I go and tell them about you some of them are going to believe and repent and I know you. You're going to forgive them if they repent and then you're not going to kill them." What it says is he fled to Tarshish. Now, where is Tarshish. It's in Spain.

Let me show you a map of exactly what took place, okay? Jonah is in Joppa. God tells him to go to Nineveh. It's about 500 miles away. He gets on a boat and he travels 2,500 miles away to Tarshish, which is in Spain. 2,500 miles away from the center of God's reviled will. As Jonah runs God hurles a storm upon the sea and it's a pretty big one. We looked at this last week as that this was really grace and not wrath. You see, because God's wrath would have killed them, but God's grace pursued him.

Well, these sailors, they begin calling on their God's hoping one of them is going to pick up and be in a good mood all at the same time and nothing's happening and so the captain, he starts walking through the ship and he sees Jonah, the prophet, and he's sleeping in the midst of a storm that's so severe that it's cutting the boat into pieces. He wakes him up. He rebukes him. He goes, "What are you doing you sleeper? Don't you see what's happening?" He says, "WE've all been praying, now you pray to your gods and maybe God will give a thought to us and we won't perish."

This is what he says: verse seven, "And they said to one another, 'Come let us cast lots that we may know on who's account this evil has come upon us.' They cast lots and lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Tell us on who's account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? Of what people are you?' He said to them, 'I'm a Hebrew and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.' Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, 'What is this that you have done?' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the lord because he had told them. Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you that the sea may quite down for us?' For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. He said to them, 'Pick me up and hurl me into to sea and then the sea will quiet down for you for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.'

Nevertheless the men rode a hard to get back to dry land, but they could not for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore they called out to the lord, 'Oh, Lord, let us not perish for this man's life and lay not on us innocent blood for you, oh Lord, have done as it pleased you.' They picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the lord exceedingly and they offered a sacrifice to the lord and made vows. The lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

There's a lot that we could obviously look at here, but I want to show you three truths. The first is this, is that God patiently reveals our sin. It's remarkable if you really think about how patient God is in each of our lives and is manifested and seen in God's patience towards this man named Jonah. I mean, think about this for a second. God patiently allowed him to flee. God patiently allowed him to get on a boat. God patiently even allowed him to take a really good nap. It must have been quite a nap. For you to be able to sleep in the midst of a storm that's tearing apart your ship either you are really tired or you are some kind of hard sleeper and God was so patient, but suddenly someone else is not so patient, and that's the sailors. You see, the sailors, they're terrified for their very life. After they wake him up and they all sort of assemble they say, "Come let us cast lots right now that we may know on who's account this evil has come upon us."

In their religion, which was paganism, which is where you just pray to a lot of gods. There's a god of the rivers, and a god of the ocean, there's a god of everything, the rocks and the trees. What would happen is this, if there was a problem and some evil fell upon you, a tree fell on your house, in paganism you actually would seek to try to appease the god of the trees because obviously they're offended at something you have done. When they say, "We need to cast lots to find out on who's account this is happening," what they're saying is this, somebody has a negative balance in their account with the god of the sea and we need to figure out who that is.

Think about that for a second. They cast lots. Now, what's that? Well, the best I can tell is it's an old school, primitive way of trying to discern God's will. For whatever reason God allowed and even used in the lives of people, in particular in times before Christ. I can't explain it. For me, how I think about it is sort of like dice. Right? They cast lots. Something they're casting. All of the sudden the lot falls to Jonah and their all looking at the dice. The look over to Jonah. Now, all eyes are on Jonah. They say, "Okay. Give it up. What did you do? Where are you from? Who are your people? How is this happening? What are we supposed to do?"

It's an amazing thing here when you think that God patiently reveals our sin. Listen, the lot fell to Jonah. What that means is this God will not allow your sin to remain hidden forever. He never does. Numbers chapter 32 verse 23 says your sin will find you out. You see, us trying to hide our sin is like a little child playing hide and go seek with their dad. It sort of looks like this, right? Where they think that they're really hiding well and there's no way that I'm going to be found and God, for whatever reason, is patiently playing along just like I used to do with my boys. They'd hide and I'd walk in the room and I'd see them. They'd be behind a pole this big and they're this big and they're trying to get skinny like this. I walk in, "Now, where is he?" I'd look under the bed and do all this kind of stuff. I could just say, "That's enough of this. I don't even want to play this game. Here you are. Okay. We're done."

No, we're patiently ... This is how God works with us. He's patient with us, but eventually he always finds us. They say, "Well, tell us what did you do? Where do you come from?" Jonah's answer is absolutely stunning. He says, "Well, I'm a Hebrew and I fear the lord who is the God of heaven who made the earth and the sea." Now, think about the futility of running from this kind of god on earth. Where do you run? Song 39 verse 7 says where shall I go from your spirit or where shall I flee from your presence? Where am I going to run that you're not there.

I don't know if you've ever had a hamster. When I was a little boy we had hamsters. We had a little cage. It sort of looked like this. You and I, let's just say that you're in your sin and you think I'm in this little hole over here over on the left and I'm going to come down these stairs. I'm going to the other side of the world 2,500 miles away to Tarshish and I'm going to hide in the wheel. Surely my owner won't find me here. For you and I we look at the whole hamster cage and we can see the whole thing. No hamster can hide from us within the cage. What you have to understand is this, that hamster cage to you is like the whole world to God. There is nowhere that you can hide on this earth from him.

You think about the futility of running from him and isn't it true that every single one of us do. What do we do? It's an amazing thing. In the whole book every single person and every single thing in the whole book responds to God in obedience and that one is the only one who says that I fear God. Nobody else in the whole book confesses they have a fear for God. No one else in the whole book rebels from God except Jonah. Isn't it amazing that its the sailors that seem to be more afraid than even Jonah. It says that they were exceedingly afraid. They felt the horror of Jonah's rebellion even more than Jonah did.

What did we do in our life when God eventually comes into the closets of our room and he shines a flashlight and he says, "Now, that's sin." Well, let's confess our sin and be forgiven. This is one of the hopes of the whole bible. He says if any of us has any sin we can confess it to God and he who is faithful and just will forgive us of our sin. You see, we, in this room, in particular those of us who know Jesus Christ as our savior, our right doctrine always walks several steps ahead of our right behavior. Sort of like last night. We went out for a walk in the woods with our dog. We have a bird dog. I think he has some problems with his attention because he just can't walk straight. He's just everywhere, uses so much energy. We're walking through the woods and there's birds and there's squirrels. He cannot walk straight and he's pulling. He's so excited to be out there that the whole time that we walked we were in a wrestling match of him trying to run ahead and me trying to pull him back.

Here's the point. Right doctrine typically walks four or five steps ahead of right behavior. That's why a man like Jonah can say, "I fear the lord who created all the earth, who created all the sea," and yet he's still acting as if those things aren't true. You see, so many times in our life the wheels of our behavior, they start wobbling because they're out of alignment with the rest of our confession of faith. We say that we believe this, and yet we live like this. What God wants to do is this, he wants to reveal our sin so that we can ask him to forgive that sin so that we can be healed and forgiven.

You see, when you and I trust Jesus Christ our position in him is established forever. We're immediately forgiven of all of our sin. We're adopted in his family, but then the rest of our life it's a process called sanctification where God is moving inside of us in order to help us grow into what we have already been made in him. I just want to encourage you that if God ever reveals sin in your life, and he will, your life and my life, we're like a really dark house and he's the god with a flashlight. He is constantly going into rooms, cleaning them out, shining light, installing a light, turning the light on and saying, "Okay, now this is clean."

Any time in your life God goes into a closet or he goes into the kitchen of your life or he goes into the dining room of your life and he finds things that are out of place within his word. Listen, the simplest and the most pleasant next step for you is always to say, "God, I was wrong. Would you forgive me?" Acts 3:19 says repent and turn to God so that times of refreshing may come from the lord. Proverbs 28:13 says whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

My question to you is this, on this day is there any sin in your life for which you are being hospitable? Is your life open? Is there a welcome mat at the door of your life today for any known sin? If there is don't wait for God to have to stir up the whole ocean in order to reveal it to you. Just go ahead and confess it to him today. What happens if we don't? Well, that's number two and that's God sovereignly rules over our storms. See, sometimes it's hard for us to imagine that the God of all mercy and the God of all grace would not only sometimes permit storms to fall upon us, but God creates storms to fall upon us. He's sovereign over all of this.

Let's look at how this happens, okay? These sailors, they're at a total dead end. The only person who knows how to appease the lord of the sea whom he's just confessed is against is rebelling against the lord of the sea. The start looking around and according to paganism something had to be done to the offender in order to pacify the god who's offended. That's why they say, "What are we supposed to do to you? We can't do anything to the god. You're the middle man. You got a problem with this god and yet our life is going to be lost because you've offended him." For them, they're saying well, we have to take some personal responsibility ourself and so the only thing we can do is ... Well, we can't do anything to the god, but we can do something to you, so what are we supposed to do to you?

It's interesting what he says. He goes, "Well, you need to pick me up and you need to hurl me into the water." I've always found this to be fascinating that Jonah and God required these sailors to be decision makers. Jonah could have just jumped. Why did God and Jonah put it on them? Why did they even have to pray. "All right, God, well look, this innocent blood. Please have mercy on us. We don't really know who you are. We're going to do this because this guy ..." Why would Jonah not just jump? We're going to see in a minute. I think it's because God wanted to create worshipers in the midst of rebellion. He's going to bring them in by causing them to be people who had to make a decision in the process.

He says, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea." They are reluctant to do so and the reason is because they have at least a half a measure of human love. Even without knowing the god of love they just look around and say, "Well, I know we're not supposed to throw people into the ocean." What they try to do is enter a rowing contest with God. They try to row harder and harder and harder, but you have to understand, providence he is sovereign. He is sovereign over all things and what the sovereignty means is that not only does God have all power and all authority ... Here's the big thing with sovereignty, you have to hear this and you have to get this, his sovereignty is always directed at a purpose.

It's not just that he's sovereign and so he just does what he wants. It's he's sovereign and he always does exactly what he wants. It's pinpointed. It's directed. There's a target to his authority. What we find here in the scriptures is that what God does in the lives of Jonah and in the lives of these sailors is that God always directs his authority to permit, or to allow storms to come into our life in order to break down our self reliance. I want you to think about every single storm you've ever gone through in your life.

Did you know that God had the power to stop all of that? He's got the power. Why would he either permit it in some cases, or in other cases create it? The bible tells us that God creates and permits storms in our life in order to draw our attention back to him and off of ourself. Most of you have been to the ocean. You set your chairs down. You make your little beach world for the day and then you go swimming and you get out into the water and all the sudden you're just having a great time. You're not thinking about where you're at. You're not thinking about where the chairs are at. You're not thinking about where your towels are at. All of the sudden you look up in an hour and you're maybe even 100 or 150 or 200 yards down. It's just the natural drift in the ocean that takes you away from where you first started.

Now, hear this. Here's the point is that you and I can literally be swimming in dependence with God today and by Tuesday you can be living in outright independence from God. Have you ever thought about this? That today you can be worshiping tomorrow you may wake up and have a conscious thought, "I need to spend some time with the lord, but I have this long to do list, so if I can tackle my to do list then maybe I'll have time at the end of the day when I'm not so stressed out about everything I have to do that I'll really be able to pay attention." Have you ever noticed not only do you rarely have time at the end of the day to get that done, but have you ever noticed that the impetus for all of that is this; I need to get things done. It's self reliance. I don't need God to do these things. I can do these things.

You and I, it's like we're on this escalator. We're always having to walk opposite of the escalator. If you just relax you move further from God and closer to independence where you just say, "You know what? I think I'll just do life on my own where I'm going to make up my own rules. I'm going to be the strength and source of authority for everything in my life." If you relax you never drift to God. You never drift to humility. You never drift to dependence upon God. When we start drifting or where we start saying, "You know what, I don't want to go to God. Like Jonah I'm going to walk even faster away." God says, "All right, well, it's time to use my authority in order to create or permit a storm."

You see, James 4:6 says that God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. He loves humility in our lives. He loves it, but there's only two things that can humble a man or a woman. One is theology, the other is affliction. He always starts with theology and when God's word, the truth of God's word, lands upon our hearts and if our heart is too hard or too independent in order to absorb and receive that seed then he goes back to the shed and he pulls out his aerator. If the soil is too hard to receive the seed that creates humility he pulls out the aerator to create humility. Every time.

Listen, if there is a storm happening in your life one of the reasons that God is allowing it or causing it is to make you say, "Solomon 121, 'I look to the hills. Where does my hope come from. My hope comes from the lord the maker of heaven and earth.'" He cares more that you look to him today than you be comfortable today. He cares more that we are drawing near to him then giving us another pillow. The reason is because he is our greatest good and he loves us so much and he knows what takes place in the lives of people that one step leads to another step that leads to another step of independence away from him.

Because this is who God is let's look up to God in the midst of the storm. If you're in a storm I want to ask you to search your heart. Ask God to search your heart. Solemn 139 verse 23 and verse 24 says this, "He says search me oh God and know my heart and see if there is any grievous way in me." Now, listen, if God does not reveal any sin when you ask him, "God, would you just search me. I'm going through a hard time," then it's not about sin and I would just encourage you to hold on. Sometimes he allows us to go through, even when sin is not taking place, he allows us to go through a storm. Sometimes you just happen to be close enough, just like these sailors, to someone who is in sin and their storm is splashing up on you.

If you have any relationship with anybody, if you're married, if you have a friend, if you have a child, the storms of their life, don't they always effect yours. They always effect yours. That's why, listen, if it is sin I would plead with you, don't resist, don't justify, just yield. If Jonah had continued the fight they all would have died. The fact is, though, some of these storms, they splash up on us, even from other people, which is why the greatest gift that you can give to people who are near you is for you to be near God.

It's the greatest thing that you can give to them. It's very similar to when you get on an airplane and they go through little safety speech and they get to the place and say, "In case of emergency these oxygen masks are going to fall down from the ceiling." What's the next thing they say? Put the mask on who's face? On your face. Why your face? When you got a little kid, this poor little kid. Look at this little kid. Shouldn't the little kid get the oxygen first? No. What they say is this, "If you're not breathing you won't be able to help them get their mask on."

They say, "You go ahead and put yours on first and then you assist those who are near you." It's the same thing spiritually. Some of you are trying to assist other people and you are far from God. Therefore you have no grace in order to give them. You have no resource to draw from. When God brings a storm, that storm is meant in order to break down our self reliance. When you see that God accomplishes the purpose of a storm when we say, "God, I'm looking back to you again."

That gets to the third thing and that's that God graciously saves people in a storm. These sailors, they finally throw in the towel and they said, "All right, this is what we're left. Would you please not cause us to perish for this man's life we're doing what's pleased you." They hurl Jonah into the sea and miraculously once he hits the sea the sea immediately ceases from it's raging. It's an absolute miracle. Now, they've been praying to their gods to know effect and so all the sudden once they see God at work all of the sudden it creates this little revival on the boat and they start making vows and offering sacrifices to God. They're saying, "This must be God. This must be the one true God." Now, we don't know the extent of everything that happened within their heart, but we do know this is that God changed them. God created worshipers out of a rebellion.

It's an amazing thing that God wants to be even in your life. If you're in a rebellion God can even create worshipers in the midst of it. Now, this is not a license for us to go on sinning, it's just a reminder that God's grace is even more powerful than our sin. Romans 5:20 says where sin increase grace abounded all the more. You see, God wasn't done saving for Jonah was now floating in the water. Did you see the word? It says to the lord appointed. See at Providence we use that word appoint like, "we appoint elders to serve." What that means is that we select them and then we give them authority to do a very specific written down task. Here's the sovereign authority of God. It says that he appointed a fish. "You go over there. He's about to drown. Swallow him."

It wasn't random. It wasn't an accidental. It wasn't coincidence. It was appointed. He appointed a fish and there Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights in all of the clammy darkness and the suffocating stench and the constant motion of the fish. There was tremendous discomfort, but that discomfort led to salvation. You see, this salvation of Jonah and the sailors is intended to show us how you and I can be saved from our sins.

When Jesus was on the earth he was preaching and people didn't believe and so Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12 verse 40, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so the son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." This is the gospel. We were sinning just like Jonah and so God sent his son Jesus Christ to rescue us. He came and he lived a righteous life and then he went to a cross and he paid for our sin. He was then buried in a grave and three days later he rose from the dead, extending to us an invitation that if we would believe in him then we would be forgiven our sin. If you have not trusted Christ I extort you let's trust Jesus and receive eternal life. Providence, God has a huge heart for lost people. He has a huge heart for you. He has a huge heart for people around the world who've never heard the gospel, but today you have heard. You can be forgiven of your sin if you look to Jesus Christ and believe. We as a body of faith here invite you to do that this morning.

If you would, let's bow, let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you for your grace. Thank you for your kindness to us. Thank you God that even in our lives when we're walking away from you, that even at that moment we are not without hope. That's because you're a god of grace and mercy and kindness. You give and you give and you give. You never stop giving. We're so grateful. God, I pray that you would help those, maybe that do not know you as savior and lord, would you open up their eyes to see the greatness of Jesus this morning, to believe in him and be forgiven of their sin.

For those of us who do know, God, would you cleanse us? Would you reveal sin in our life and bring greater healing and growth to us? God, we also pray that the good news that you're a missionary god, we know that it needs to get to the world, so we pray that as we worship you now, not only in singing, but in giving that you would take these resources and you would mobilize them efficiently and effectively in order to reach people for Jesus Christ. We're grateful. We love you and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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