

Sermon Reflections

Salvation Belongs to the Lord (Jonah 1)

Guest Teacher: Pastor Kenneth Mbugua of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Nairobi, Kenya

We (Grace Bible) have gone through the book of Jonah together at GBC in the not too distant past. What was the overall message of the book? Identify the three key characters in Jonah 1.

- As Christians we are aware of “the gap” between who we are and what we know. In what ways can this be dangerous for the believer? How is the life of Jonah an example of this?
- 2 Kings 14:25 records Jonah serving the Lord as a prophet. In Jonah 1, however, God’s command exposed the rebellion and idolatry within Jonah’s heart and revealed what he truly treasured. His will was contrary to God’s will, and so he entered into a state of blatant rebellion against God. Have you ever experienced this in your walk with the Lord? How did the Lord bring you to repentance?
- Jonah’s life recorded in chapter one is marked by not only running from the command of God, but also prayerlessness. What does prayerlessness reveal about what is going on inside the heart?
- Jonah’s solution for the raging storm was to have himself thrown into the sea. At this point Jonah’s heart was so hard toward God that he would rather die than repent and seek God. How does a servant of God arrive at this point?
- Jonah’s confessional Theology is not the problem. He speaks the truth about who God is. How then does it follow that orthopraxy does not accompany his orthodoxy? Are there areas that this is true in your life?
- Outline the progression of the crew’s fear. Compare Jonah’s self-proclaimed fear of God and that of the sailors. How do you respond to God’s continued mercy and grace to you? Is one of the responses a desire to grant mercy and grace to others, including your enemies? Furthermore, we can see the providence of God at work as He uses the disobedience of His prophet to create the means by which the pagan sailors hear of who He is.
- Ultimately, the book of Jonah is about our compassionate God. Despite Jonah’s rebellion, God in His lovingkindness pursues Jonah - who is like the older brother of the prodigal son. We see the human characters within this narrative serve the role of a backdrop to display the glory of God. God’s sovereignty, righteousness, and mercy are all on display. Trace them out in the text. Trace them out in your own life as they have worked for your good; moreover, think of how all of God’s blessings flow to us through Christ. Pastor Mbugua stated that seeing Christ in our hearts and heads causes worship to arise, and worship kills idols. How might you stir up your brothers and sisters to keep a constant gaze on Jesus?