

READ Jonah chapter 2

What – The context of this scripture is legendary. We teach the story of Jonah and the big fish to our children yet fail to realize what a powerful lesson it is for us adults. Jonah, in chapter one of this book, purposely disobeys God and decides to run from God instead of doing what God has asked of him. How many of us know that we are not living according to God's plan? In the process, Jonah is thrown overboard in the middle of the ocean. Likewise, we feel helpless and hopeless when the results of our disobedience come home to roost. God provided a big fish to swallow Jonah and save his life. Chapter two records the prayer of Jonah from the belly of the fish, thanking God for His love and salvation and pledging to be faithful from here on out. With that God commanded the fish to "vomit" Jonah onto the shore.

Why – This scripture is important for several reasons. First, we can all relate to Jonah's emotions and reaction. Many of us sit in church or read God's Word and think to ourselves, "I can't do that!" We run from God by putting out of our minds the things we know we should be doing. I firmly believe that our cultures addiction to "busyness" is an attempt to run from God. We simply don't have time for Him, and consequently we don't have time to notice His light shining on our sin. The Christian rock band "Hawk Nelson" puts it this way in a song, "If I listen, I'd have to change something about me." The scary truth is, however, that we are just like Jonah. The more we run, the harder we will fall. More importantly, however, is the fact that Jesus used this scripture to describe himself and the three days He spent in the tomb. Was Jesus there because of His disobedience? Was He guilty of a sin against the Fathers will? Of course not! Jesus spent YOUR time in the belly of the fish. He died and suffered for your disobedience. Because of that, all of us can share in this prayer with Jonah.

WOW – So what did Jonah pray that we can repeat to God? Verses three - seven reminded us that we have only one chance during the swirling world of chaos that we live in, and that is the grace of God. Verse eight reminded us that it is probably the idols that we surround ourselves with that lead to our downfall. Jonah's greatest idol was pride. Pride is the root of all sin and is a major idol today. Finally, verse nine reminded us that God wants our hearts. How do we commit our hearts to God? Knowledge about God is not enough. Jonah knew God as he ran from Him. James 2:19 reminds us that even the demons know God. WE HAVE TO ACT ON WHAT WE KNOW TO BE TRUE. Obedience is the key to real faith. Jonah told God that he would sacrifice with thanksgiving and make good on his vows. Follow through and action based on the knowledge of God is the true definition of faith. Hopefully, we are not too busy to realize this. God's plan for us is simple. Stop running, stop hiding and start following. You will be blessed for your obedience.