

God's Promise Foreshadowed

Jonah 2:9

I will say, "Salvation comes from the Lord."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Something smells fishy. It's not the story of Jonah—this is a real, true story that actually happened. It's not Jonah either, although surely Jonah could've used some Febreze inside that giant fish. No, it was Jonah's behavior. It stunk because it had the awful smell of sin.

Jonah had disobeyed God badly. God told Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh, but he refused to obey and ran away in the opposite direction. Now he found himself sinking down inside of a giant fish, pondering not only the smell of the fish guts surrounding him, but also the disgusting smell of his own sins. There, in the depths of the sea and the depths of his guilt, Jonah prayed the beautiful words of the reading for today from Jonah 2.

Have you felt this kind of guilt before? Maybe you haven't literally run away from God before, but certainly we all have refused to obey God's commands. In a way then, we run away from loving our family, we run away from putting God first in our hearts and we therefore run away from God himself. Soon enough, we quickly find ourselves drowning in sin like Jonah.

But Jonah knew the Lord, and he knew that though his sin was great, God's forgiveness was even greater. In this prayer Jonah expressed confidence that God would hear him, forgive him, and deliver him. Even if Jonah drowned in the water, he knew that he would not drown in his sin. Why? Because, "Salvation comes from the Lord."

Truly, forgiveness of our sins and the promise of eternal life—our salvation—comes only from the Lord. And this salvation came to us when God himself came to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus never ran away from his Father's commands, but always humbly obeyed. He lived perfectly *for you*. Jesus also went to the cross to be drowned in death by our sin and guilt so that we wouldn't have to. Jesus died *for you!* But then, Jesus rose from the dead victorious over sin and death to prove that you will rise to life too. Jesus rose *for you!*

This great victory of Jesus for us was something that God had promised for ages. This true story of Jonah was another event that foreshadowed the victory of the coming Savior. Just as Jonah came back to dry ground after three days, so Jesus also rose after three days. And best of all, just as God delivered Jonah by grace, so God now delivers us. Truly, "Salvation comes from the Lord." Thanks be to God!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What is something you have felt guilty about?
- Why do we know that Jesus will hear and answer our prayers when we ask for forgiveness?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Identify all the things we can learn about prayer in Jonah 2.
- How do you think Jonah's attitude changed after he was delivered from the giant fish? How do our attitudes change when we realize that Jesus has delivered us?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Which miracle is greater? Jonah surviving three days inside of a giant fish, or Jesus rising from the dead? Explain your answer.
- Explain how the story of Jonah foreshadowed the story of Easter (cf. Matthew 12:38-41 for help).

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, thank you for hearing our prayers for forgiveness. We know that because you rose from the dead, you have forgiven and saved us. Thank you for your victory! Amen.

Hymn: CW #152 – I Know that My Redeemer Lives

1. I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living Head!
2. He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save.
He lives all-glorious in the sky;
He lives exalted there on high.